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METROPOLITAN
SPECIAL COLLECTION

TRADITIONS
OF
LANCASHIRE

COLLEGIATE CHURCH, MANCHESTER.

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TRADITIONS
OF
LANCASHIRE

BY

JOHN ROBY

With Twelve Collotype Reproductions of the Original Engravings by

EDWARD FINDEN

from Drawings by

GEORGE PICKERING

FIRST SERIES

FREDERICK WARNE & Co., LTD.
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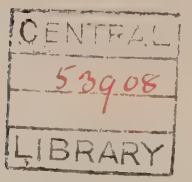

"I know I have herein made myself subject unto a world of judges, and am likest to receive most controulment of such as are least able to sentence me. Well I wote that the works of no writers have appeared to the world in a more curious age than this; and that, therefore, the more circumspection and wariness is required in the publishing of anything that must endure so many sharp sights and censures. The consideration whereof as it hath made me all the more heedy not to displease any, so hath it given not the less hope of pleasing all."

VERSTEGAN, *Rest. dec. Ant.*

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

CONTENTS

	PAGE
PUBLISHERS' PREFACE	ix
MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR	xi
PREFACE	xvii
INTRODUCTION	xxi

TRADITIONS

SIR TARQUIN	1
THE GOBLIN BUILDERS	13
MAB'S CROSS	30
THE PRIOR OF BURSCOUGH	64
THE EAGLE AND CHILD	89
THE BLACK KNIGHT OF ASHTON	118
FAIR ELLEN OF RADCLIFFE	132
THE ABBOT OF WHALLEY	138
SIR EDWARD STANLEY	171
GEORGE MARSH, THE MARTYR	191
DR. DEE, THE ASTROLOGER	211
THE SEER	247
THE EARL OF TYRONE	274
HOGHTON TOWER	310
THE LANCASHIRE WITCHES	352
SIEGE OF LATHOM	391
RAVEN CASTLE	429
THE PHANTOM VOICE	456
THE BAR-GAIST	472
THE HAUNTED MANOR-HOUSE	483
CLITHEROE CASTLE	504
THE GREY MAN OF THE WOOD	550

THE PUBLISHERS' PREFACE

It is many years since John Roby's "Traditions of Lancashire" was first given to the world, but the work has lost little of its original savour. That its literary quality, praised by Sir Francis Palgrave, is still highly esteemed is admittedly a tribute to the genius of the Author.

Having long been out of print—stray copies commanding high prices—it has been determined to republish them in a more compact and less costly form.

The text has been preserved in its full integrity, and consequently various inaccuracies in the original editions have been left untouched.

The collotype illustrations to the present edition are reproductions from the beautiful plates (engraved by Edward Finden, from drawings by George Pickering) of the original edition, which have been much admired as picturesque works of art.

MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR*

The late John Roby was born at Wigan on the 5th January, 1793. From his father, Nehemiah Roby, who was for many years Master of the Grammar-School at Haigh, near Wigan, he inherited a good constitution and unbended principles of honour and integrity. From the family of his mother, Mary Aspall, he derived the quick, impressible temperament of genius, and the love of humour which so conspicuously marks the Lancashire character. He was the youngest child. His thirst for knowledge was early and strongly manifested. Being once told in childhood not to be so inquisitive, his appeal ever after was "*Inquisitive* wants to know." As he grew up into boyhood, surrounded by objects to which tradition had assigned her marvellous stories, they sank silently but indelibly into his mind. In his immediate vicinity were Haigh Hall and Mab's Cross, the scenes of Lady Mabel's sufferings and penance—the subject of one of his earliest tales. Almost within sight of the windows lay the fine range of hills of which Rivington Pike is a spur. In after-life he recalled with pleasure the many sports in that district which were the haunts of his early days, and the scenes of the legends he afterwards embodied. While yet a child he regularly took the organ in a chapel at Wigan during the Sunday service. He also early excelled in drawing, and after he had commenced the avocations of a banker the use of the pencil was a favourite recreation. His first prose composition, at the age of fifteen years, took a prize in a periodical for the best essay on a prescribed subject, by young persons under a specified age.

* This memoir has been almost wholly derived from the "Sketch of the Literary Life and Character of John Roby," written by his widow, and occupying 117 pages of the posthumous volume of his *Legendary and Poetical Remains*.

Thus encouraged, poetry, essay, tale, were all tried, and with success. In his eighteenth or nineteenth year he received a silver snuff-box, inscribed, "The gift of the Philosophic Society, Wigan, to their esteemed lecturer and worthy member."

Mr. Roby first appeared before the public as a poet, publishing in 1815 "Sir Bertram, a poem in six cantos." Another poem quickly followed, entitled "Lorenzo, a Tale of Redemption." In 1816, he married Ann, the youngest daughter of James and Dorothy Bealey, of Derrikens, near Blackburn, by whom he had nine children, three of whom died in their infancy. His next publication was "The Duke of Mantua," a tragedy, which appeared in 1823, passed through three or four editions in a short time, and, after being out of print, was included in the posthumous volume of *Legendary Remains*. In the summer of that year he made an excursion in Scotland, visiting "the bonnie braes o' Yarrow" in company with James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd. The literary leisure of the next six years was occupied in collecting materials for the *Traditions of Lancashire*, and in weaving these into tales of romantic interest. In this task he received the most courteous assistance from several representatives of noble houses connected with the traditions of the county; particularly from the late Earl and Countess of Crawford and Balcarres, and also from the late Earl of Derby.

The *first* series of *The Traditions of Lancashire* appeared in 1829, in two volumes (including twenty tales), illustrated by plates. The reception of the work equalled Mr. Roby's most sanguine expectations; and a second edition was called for within twelve months. The late Sir Francis Palgrave, in a letter to Mr. Roby, dated 26th October, 1829, thus estimates the work:—

> "As compositions, the extreme beauty of your style, and the skill which you have shown in working up the rude materials, must entitle them to the highest rank in the class of work to which they belong. . . . You have made such a valuable addition, not only to English literature, but to English topography, by your collection—for these popular traditions form, or ought to form, an important feature in topographical history—that it is to be hoped you will not stop with the present volumes."

The *second* series of the "Traditions," consisting also of two volumes (including twenty tales), uniform with the first, was published in 1831, and met with similar success. Both series were received in the most cordial manner by the leading periodicals of the day; while they were more than once quoted by Sir Walter Scott, who characterized the whole as an elegant work. In the production of these tales, Mr. Roby's practice was to make himself master of the historical ground-work of the story, and as far as possible of the manners and customs of the period and then to commence composition, with Fosbroke's *Encyclopædia of Antiquities* at hand, for accuracy of costume, &c. He always gave the credit of his style, which the *Westminster Review* termed "a very model of good Saxon," to his native county, the force and energy of whose dialect arose mainly from the prevalence of the Teutonic element. "The thought digs out the word," was his favourite saying, when the exact expression he wanted did not at once occur. In these "Traditions" his great creative power is conspicuous; about two hundred different characters are introduced, no one of which reminds the reader of another, while there is abundant diversity of both heroic and comic incident and adventure. A gentleman, after reading the "Traditions," remarked that for invention he scarcely knew Mr. Roby's equal. All these characters, it should be stated, are creations: not one is an idealized portrait. The short vivid descriptions of scenery scattered throughout are admirable. Each tale is, in fact, a cabinet picture, combining history and romance with landscape. Mr. Roby excelled in depicting the supernatural; and one German reviewer declared his story of Rivington Pike to be "the only authentic tale of demoniacal possession the English have."

In 1832, Mr. Roby visited the English lakes, and recorded his impressions in lively sketches both with pen and pencil. In the spring of 1837 he made a rapid tour on the Continent, the notes and illustrative sketches of which were published in two volumes, under the title of *Seven Weeks in Belgium, Switzerland, Lombardy, Piedmont, Savoy, &c.* In 1840, Mr. Roby again visited the Continent by a different route, making notes and sketches of what he saw. At the close

of the year he was engaged in preparing a new edition of the "Traditions," in a less expensive form. It was published in three volumes, as the first of a series of Popular Traditions of England; his intention being to follow up those of Lancashire with similar legends of Yorkshire, for which he wrote a few tales which appeared in Blackwood's and Fraser's Magazines.

The principal literary occupation of the next four years appears to have been the preparation and delivery of lectures on various subjects in connection with literary and mechanics' institutions. In 1844 his health gave way, and for years he suffered severely. As a last resource he tried the water-cure at Malvern in the spring of 1847, and with complete success. In the summer of 1849 he again married—the lady who survived him, and to whose "sketch of his life" we are largely indebted in this brief memoir. In the two short years following this marriage—the two last of his life—he was busily engaged in writing and delivering lectures, visiting places which form the scenes of some of his latest legends, and in the composition of a series of tales intended to illustrate the influence of Christianity in successive periods, a century apart. Deferring that for the fourth century, he wrote six, bringing the series down to the close of the seventh century; when he determined on visiting Scotland. With his wife and daughter he embarked at Liverpool on board the steamer *Orion* for Glasgow, which ill-fated vessel struck on some rocks about one o'clock in the morning of the 18th June, 1850, and went down. Mrs. and Miss Roby were rescued after having been some time in the water, but of the husband and father only the corpse was recovered; and his remains were laid in his family grave in the burial-ground of the Independent Chapel, Rochdale, on Saturday, the 22nd of that month.

Mr. Roby was not more remarkable for his numerous and varied talents than for his warm and affectionate heart, rich imagination, great love of humour, and deep and earnest piety. He was a facile versifier, an elegant prose writer, an able botanist and physiologist. Possessing a fine ear, rich voice, and great musical taste, he not only took his vocal share in part-song, but wrote several melodies,

which have been published. In one species of rapid mental calculation, or rather combination of figures—giving in an instant the sum of a double column of twenty figures in each row, or a square of six figures—he far excelled Bidder, the calculating boy. He was a skilful draughtsman, a clever mimic and ventriloquist, an excellent *raconteur*, an accomplished conversationalist, ever fascinating in the select social circle, and always "tender and wise" in that of home. He was a man of genuine benevolence, a cordial friend, an affectionate husband and father, and a humble and devout Christian. His family crest was a garb or wheat-sheaf, with the motto, "I am ready"; and in his case—though his death was sudden and unexpected—illness and bereavement, mental and physical suffering—in short, the chastenings and discipline of life, had done their work. His "sheaf" was "ready for the garner."

October, 1866.

PREFACE

A PREFACE is rarely needed, generally intrusive, and always tiresome—seldom read, more seldom desiderated : a piece of egotism at best, where the author, speaking of himself, has the less chance of being listened to. Yet—and what speaker does not think he ought to be heard ?—the author conceives there may be some necessity, some reason, why he should step forward for the purpose of explaining his views in connection with the character and design of the following pages.

In the northern counties, and more particularly in Lancashire, the great arena of the STANLEYS during the civil wars—where the progress and successful issue of his cause was but too confidently anticipated by CHARLES STUART, and the scene especially of those strange and unholy proceedings in which the " Lancashire witches " rendered themselves so famous—it may readily be imagined that a number of interesting legends, anecdotes, and scraps of family history are floating about, hitherto preserved chiefly in the shape of oral tradition. The antiquary, in most instances, rejects the information that does not present itself in the form of an authentic and well-attested fact ; and legendary lore, in particular, he throws aside as worthless and unprofitable. The author of the " TRADITIONS OF LANCASHIRE," in leaving the dry and heraldic pedigrees which unfortunately constitute the great bulk of those works that bear the name of county histories, enters on the more entertaining, though sometimes apocryphal, narratives which exemplify and embellish the records of our forefathers.

A native of Lancashire, and residing there during the greater part of his life, he has been enabled to collect a mass of local traditions, now fast dying from the memories of the inhabitants. It is his object to perpetuate these

interesting relics of the past, and to present them in a form that may be generally acceptable, divested of the dust and dross in which the originals are but too often disfigured, so as to appear worthless and uninviting.

Tradition is not an unacceptable source of historical inquiry; and the writer who disdains to follow these glimmerings of truth will often find himself in the dark, with nothing but his own opinions—the smouldering vapour of his own imagination—to guide him in the search.

The following extract from a German writer on the subject sufficiently exemplifies and illustrates the design the author has generally had before him in the composition and arrangement of the following legends :—

"Simple and unimportant as the subject may at first appear, it will be found, upon a nearer view, well worth the attention of philosophical and historical inquirers. All genuine, popular Tales, arranged with local and national reference, cannot fail to throw light upon contemporary events in history, upon the progressive cultivation of society, and upon the prevailing modes of thinking in every age. Though not consisting of a recital of bare facts, they are in most instances founded upon fact, and in so far connected with history, which occasionally, indeed, borrows from, and as often reflects light upon, these familiar annals, these more private and interesting casualties of human life.

"It is thus that popular tradition, connected with all that is most interesting in human history and human action, upon a national scale—a mirror reflecting the people's past worth and wisdom—invariably possesses so deep a hold upon its affections, and offers so many instructive hints to the man of the world, to the statesman, the citizen, and the peasant.

"Signs of approaching changes, no less in manners than in states, may likewise be traced, floating down this popular current of opinions, fertilizing the seeds scattered by a past generation, and marking by its ebbs and flows the state of the political atmosphere, and the distant gathering of the storm.

"National traditions further serve to throw light upon ancient and modern mythology; and in many instances

they are known to preserve traces of their fabulous descent, as will clearly appear in some of the following selections. It is the same with those of all nations, whether of eastern or western origin, Greek, Scythian, or Kamtschatkan. And hence, among every people just emerged out of a state of barbarism, the same causes led to the production of similar compositions ; and a chain of connection is thus established between the fables of different nations, only varied by clime and custom, sufficient to prove, not merely a degree of harmony, but secret interchanges and communications."

A record of the freaks of such airy beings, glancing through the mists of national superstition, would prove little inferior in poetical interest and association to the fanciful creations of the Greek mythology. The truth is, they are of one family, and we often discover allusions to the beautiful fable of Psyche or the story of Midas ; sometimes with the addition, that the latter was obliged to admit his barber into his uncomfortable secret. Odin and Jupiter are brothers, if not the same person ; and the northern Hercules is often represented as drawing a strong man by almost invisible threads, which pass from his tongue round the limbs of the victim, thereby symbolizing the power of eloquence. Several incidents in the following tales will be recognized by those conversant with Scandinavian literature, thus adding another link to the chain of certainty which unites the human race, or at any rate that part of it from which Europe was originally peopled, in one original tribe or family.

A work of this nature, embodying the material of our own island traditions, has not yet been attempted ; and the writer confidently hopes that these tales may be found fully capable of awakening and sustaining the peculiar and high-wrought interest inherent in the legends of our Continental neighbours. Should they fail of producing this effect, he requests that it may be attributed rather to his want of power to conjure up the spirits of past ages, than to any want of capabilities in the subjects he has chosen to introduce.

To the local and to the general reader—to the antiquary and the uninitiated—to the admirers of the fine arts and

embellishments of our literature, he hopes his labours will prove acceptable ; and should the plan succeed, not Lancashire alone, but the other counties, may in their turn become the subject of similar illustrations. The tales are arranged chronologically, forming a somewhat irregular series from the earliest records to those of a comparatively modern date. They may in point of style appear at the commencement stiff and stalwart, like the chiselled warriors, whose deeds are generally enveloped in a rude narrative, hard and ponderous as their gaunt and grisly effigies. The events, however, as the author has found them, gradually assimilate with the familiar aspects and everyday affections of our nature—subsiding from the stern and repulsive character of a barbarous age into the usual forms and modes of feeling incident to humanity—as some cold and barren region, where one stunted blade of affection can scarce find shelter, gradually opens out into the quiet glades and lowly habitudes of ordinary existence.

The author disclaims all pretensions to superior knowledge. He would not even arrogate to himself the name of antiquary. Some of the incidents are perhaps well known, being merely put into a novel and more popular shape. The spectator is here placed upon an eminence where the scenes assume a new aspect, new combinations of beauty and grandeur being the result of the vantage-ground he has obtained. Nothing more is attempted than what others, with the same opportunities, might have done as well—perhaps better. When Columbus broke the egg—if we may be excused the arrogance of the simile—all that were present could have done the same ; and some, no doubt, might have performed the operation more dexterously.

1*st October*, 1829.

INTRODUCTION

No method has yet been discovered for preserving the recollection of human actions and events precisely as they have occurred, whole and unimpaired, in all their truth and reality. Time is an able teacher of causes and qualities, but he setteth little store by names and persons, or the mould and fashion of their deeds. The pyramids have outlived the very names of their builders. "Oblivion," says Sir Thomas Browne, "blindly scatters her poppies. Time has spared the epitaph of Adrian's house—confounded that of himself!"

Few things are so durable as the memory of those mischiefs and oppressions which Time has bequeathed to mankind. The names of conquerors and tyrants have been faithfully preserved, while those from whom have originated the most useful and beneficial discoveries are entirely unknown, or left to perish in darkness and uncertainty. We should not have known that Lucullus brought cherries from the banks of the Phasis but through the details of massacre and spoliation—the splendid barbarities of a Roman triumph. In some instances Time displays a fondness and a caprice in which the gloomiest tyranny is seen occasionally to indulge. The unlettered Arab cherishes the memory of his line. He traces it unerringly to a remoter origin than could be claimed or identified by the most ancient princes of Europe. In many instances he could give a clearer and a higher genealogy to his horse. But that which Time herself would spare, the critic and the historian would demolish. The northern barbarians are accused of an exterminating hostility to learning. It never was half so bitter as the warfare which learning displays against everything of which she herself is not the author. A living historian has denied that the poems of Ossian had any existence save in the conceptions

of Macpherson, because he condescendingly informs us, " Before the invention or introduction of letters, human memory is incapable of any faithful record which may be transmitted from age to age."

The account which Macpherson gave may be a fiction, but it is admitted by those who know the native Scotch and Irish tongues, and have dwelt where no other language is spoken, that there are poems which have been transmitted from generation to generation (orally it must be, since letters are either entirely unknown or are comparatively of recent introduction), the machinery of which proves them to have been invented about the time when Christianity was first preached in these islands.

Tradition may well be named the eldest daughter of Time, and nursing-mother of the Muses—the fruitful parent of that very learning which would, in the cruel spirit of its pedantry and malice, make her the sacrifice while it lays claim to the inheritance. What is learning but a laborious, often ill-drawn, and almost invariably partial deduction from facts which tradition has first collected ? When we consider in whose hands learning has been, almost ever since its creation ; the uses which have been made of it by priests and politicians ; by poets, orators, and flatterers ; by controversialists and designing historians ;—how commonly has it been perverted to abuse the very senses of mankind, and to give a bias to their thoughts and feelings, only to mislead and to betray ! Let the evidence be well compared, and a view taken of the respective amounts of doubt and certainty which appertain to human history as it appears in written records, and it will be seen that, to verify any given fact, so as to prevent the possibility of doubt, we must throw aside our reverence for the scholar's pen and the midnight lamp, which seem, like the faculty of speech, only given to men, as the witty Frenchman observed, " to conceal their thoughts." This comparative process is precisely what has been adopted by M. L.Petit Radel in his new theory upon the origin of Greece. " Not satisfied with the mythological equivocation and contradictory statements which till now have perplexed the question, after a residence of ten years this learned man returns with a new theory,

which would destroy all our received ideas, and carry the civilization and cradle of the Greeks much beyond the time and place that have till now been supposed. It is their very architecture that M. Petit Radel interrogates, and its passive testimony serves as a basis to his system. He has visited, compared, and meditated on the unequivocal vestiges of more than one hundred and fifty antique citadels, altogether neglected by the Greek and Roman authors. Their form and construction serve him, with the aid of ingenious reasoning, to prove that Greece was civilized a long time before the arrival of the Egyptian colonies. He does not despair of tracing back the descent of the Greeks to the Hyperborean nations, always by the analogy of their structures, which, by a singular identity, are found also among the Phœnicians. The Institute have pronounced the following judgment upon his theory :—' If the developments which remain to be given to us suffice to gain the votes of the learned, and induce them to adopt this theory as demonstrated truth, M. L.Petit Radel may flatter himself with having made in history a discovery truly worthy to occupy a place in the progress of human genius.' "

Thus the very time in which a living historian of England has chosen to inflict an impotent blow, from the leaden sceptre of Johnsonian criticism, upon all facts which claim an existence anterior to the invention of books, appears pregnant with a discovery of a method of investigating the most remote eras, which presuppose an inherent spirit of fallacy and falsehood in all written records of their existence.

About three hundred years after the era of the Olympiads, the first date of authentic history, Herodotus astonished his countrymen by the writings he brought forth. Who kept the records out of which his work was elaborated ere he was ready to stamp the facts with the only seal which our modern historians will acknowledge or allow ? Tradition doubtless was his guide, which the learned themselves complain of as the source of what they term his errors and his fables. But the voice of tradition has often reinstated his claims to our belief, where it had been suspended either by ignorance or pretensions to

superior knowledge. A modern traveller found, in one of the isles of the Grecian Archipelago, undoubted vestiges of a state of society similar to that of the Amazons. The order of the sexes was wholly inverted. The wife ruled the husband, and his and her kindred, with uncontrolled and unsparing rigour, sanctioned and even commanded by the laws. Yet the very existence of any such people as the Amazons of ancient history has not only been questioned, but denied. Learning has proved it to be impossible.

The Marquess of Hastings told the Rev. Mr. Swan, chaplain of the Cambrian, that he had founded the germ of fact from which many of the most incredible tales in ancient history had grown during his stay in India. One instance only we would relate. A Grecian author mentions a people who had only one leg. An embassy from the interior was conducted into the presence of the viceroy, and he could by no persuasion prevail upon the obsequious minister to use more than one of his legs, though he stood during the whole of a protracted audience.

But there are other forces now drawing into the field to support the long-neglected claims of tradition. Etymology, which professed to settle doubts by an appeal to the elementary sounds of words, was banished from the politer and more influential circles of English learning by a decree as arbitrary as that pronounced on the poems of Ossian. It has come back with a new commission and under a new title ;—Ethnography is the name given by our Continental neighbours to this new science, which, in its future developments, may bring to light some of the most obscure and important circumstances affecting the human race, from its origin through every succeeding epoch of its existence. The distinguishing object of this inquiry is to identify the fortunes, migrations, and changes of the human family as to situation, policy, religion, agriculture, and arts, by comparing the terms supplied by or introduced into the language of any one country with the names of the same objects in every other. There would be no such thing as chance in nature could we know the laws which determine every separate accident. In like manner there will scarcely be any doubt respecting the primitive history of man when this new science shall have accumulated and revealed all

the treasures which it may be enabled to appropriate. An agreement in the primitive term which any object of cultivation, physical or moral, bears among many different tribes, spread over many and far-distant regions, will be considered as the best evidence of one common origin. Disagreement in a similar case, accompanied with a great variety of terms of considerable dissonance, will be equally conclusive as to the object being indigenous or of a multifarious origin.

Already has Valbi, in his Ethnographic Atlas, given us a list of names and coincidences to an extent truly astonishing. Yet what is this, in fact, but a judicious use of Bacon's old but much-neglected rule of questioning nature about facts instead of theories—examining evidences ere rhetoric had made language one vast heap of implied falsehood ?

In a court of inquiry we examine witnesses as to facts, not opinions. But the historian reads mankind in cities ; the philosopher in the clouds. He who is anxious for the truth should look abroad on the plains or in the woods, where man's first prerogative, the giving of names, was exercised. His knowledge of nature must be wretchedly imperfect who thinks that no grand outline of truth can possibly exist in the dim records of human recollection, ere the pen of the scholar was employed to depict the scenes that opinion or prejudice had created. How many pages of Clarendon's, Hume's, or even Robertson's history could be cancelled if we had access to all the recollections of each event, and the evidence of the unlettered vulgar who had witnessed the fact brought to our notice, even through the mouthpiece of tradition !

There is more truth than comes to the surface in that speech put into the lips of the father of lies by a late poet, where he says—

" The Bible's your book—history mine."

Savigny makes the same charge against one class of historians in his own country :—" However discordant," says he, " their other doctrines may appear, they agree in the practice of adopting each a particular system, and in viewing all historical evidence as so many proofs of its truth."

Were it not for that contempt we have already noticed as the offspring of pride and dogmatism, and which, in the administration of the republic of letters, has been entertained and openly proclaimed for every kind of history except that which its own acts may have originated, we should have been in possession of thousands of facts and notions now overlaid and lost irrecoverably to the philosopher and the historian.

The origin and the progress of nations, next after the school divinity of the Middle Ages, has occasioned the most copious outpouring of conjectural criticism. The simple mode of research suggested by the works of Verstegan, Camden, and Spelman would, long before this time, have made the early history of the British tribes as clear as it is now obscure. Analogies in the primary sounds of each dialect; similarity or difference in regard to objects of the first, or of a common, necessity; rules or laws for the succession of property, which are as various as the tribes which overran the empire; the nature, agreement, or dissimilarity in religious worship with those vestiges of its ritual and celebration which, by the "pious frauds" and connivance of the early church, still lurk in the pastimes of our rural districts:—the new science of which we have spoken, by taking cognisance of these and all other existing sources of legitimate investigation, will settle the source and affinities of nations upon a plan as much superior to that of Grotius and his school as fact and reason exceed the guess-work of the theorist and the historian. Meantime we would cite a few examples that illustrate and bear more particularly on the subject to which our inquiries have been directed.

Nothing seems at first sight more difficult than to establish a community of origin between the gods of Olympus and those of the Scandinavian mythology. The attempt has often been made, and each time with increased success. Observe the process adopted in this interesting inquiry.

"Every country in Europe has invested its popular fictions with the same common marvels—all acknowledge the agency of the lifeless productions of nature; the intervention of the same supernatural machinery; the existence of elves, fairies, dwarfs, giants, witches, and enchanters; the use of spells, charms, and amulets, and all

those highly-gifted objects, of whatever form or name, whose attributes refute every principle of human experience, which are to conceal the possessor's person, annihilate the bounds of space, or command a gratification of all our wishes. There are the constantly-recurring types which embellish the popular tale; which have been transferred to the more laboured pages of romance; and which, far from owing their first appearance in Europe to the Arabic conquest of Spain, or the migrations of Odin to Scandinavia, are known to have been current on its eastern verge long anterior to the era of legitimate history. The Nereids of antiquity, the daughters of the 'sea-born seer,' are evidently the same with the mermaids of the British and northern shores. The inhabitants of both are fixed in crystal caves or coral palaces beneath the waters of the ocean; they are alike distinguished for their partialities to the human race, and their prophetic powers in disclosing the events of futurity. The Naiads differ only in name from the Nixen of Germany and Scandinavia (Nisser), or the water-elves of our countrymen. Ælfric and the Nornæ, who wove the web of life, and sang the fortunes of the illustrious Helga, are but the same companions who attended Ilithyia at the births of Iamos and Hercules, the venerable Parcæ of antiquity."

The Russian Rusalkis are of the same family. The man-in-the-moon has found a circulation throughout the world. "The clash of elements in the thunder-storm was ascribed in Hellas to the rolling chariot-wheels of Jove, and in the Scandinavian mythology to the ponderous waggon of the Norwegian Thor."

To the above extract, which is taken from the excellent preface by the editor to Wharton's *History of English Poetry*, may be added the number of high peaks bearing the name of Tor, or Thor, seen more especially on both coasts of Devonshire, and which are supposed to signalize the places of his worship.* From the same source may be derived affinities equally strong between the Highland

*"They worshipped fire as the representative of the Deity, which they kept continually burning on the tops of their highest mountains."—*Foreign Quarterly Review*, No. XV: Art. "Popular Poetry," p. 77.

Urisks, the Russian Leschies, the Pomeranian or Wendish Berstucs, and the Panes and Panisci who presided over the fields and forests of Arcadia. The mountains of Germany and Scandinavia are under the governance of a set of metallurgic divinities, who agree with the Cabiri, Hephæsti, Telchines, and Idæan Dactyli. The Brownies and Fairies are of the same kindred as the Lares of Latium. "The English Puck, the Scottish Bogle, the French Esprit Follet, or Goblin, the Gobelinus of monkish Latinity, and the German Kobold, are only varied names for the Grecian Kobalus, whose sole delight consisted in perplexing the human race, and calling up those harmless terrors that constantly hover round the minds of the timid." The English and Scottish terms, '*Puck*,' '*Bogle*,' are the same as the German 'Spuk' and the Danish 'Spogelese,' without the sibilant aspiration. These words are general names for any kind of spirit, and correspond to the 'pouk' of Piers Ploughman. In Danish 'spog' mean a joke, trick, or prank, and hence the character of Robin Goodfellow. In Iceland, Puki is regarded as an evil sprite; and in the language of that country, 'at pukra' means both to make a murmuring noise and to steal clandestinely. The names of these spirits seem to have originated in their boisterous temper—'spuken,' Germ. to make a noise: 'spog' Dan. obstreperous mirth; 'pukke,' Dan. to boast, scold. The Germans use 'pochin' in the same figurative sense, though literally it means to strike, beat; and is the same with our *poke*."

However varied in name, the persons and attributes of these immaterial beings have no variance which will not readily be accounted for by the difference of climate, territorial surface, and any priority that one tribe had gained over another in the march of mind. The relics of such a system were much more abundant half a century ago, and many a tale of love and violence, garnished with the machinery of that *mythos* might have been gleaned from the unwritten learning of the people. Who would expect to find amongst the rudest of the Irish peasantry—whose ancestors never knew the use of letters, and by whom, even down to living generations, the English tongue has not been spoken—a number of fictions, amongst the rest

the tale of Cupid and Psyche—closely corresponding to that of the Greeks ?* Who that has been a child does not recollect the untiring delight with which he listened to those ingenious arithmetical progressions, reduced to poetry, called "*The House that Jack built,*" and the perils of "*The Old Woman with the pig*"? Few even of those in riper years would suspect their Eastern origin. In the *Sepher Haggadah* there is an ancient parabolical hymn, in the Chaldee language, sung by the Jews at the feast of the Passover, and commemorative of the principal events in the history of that people. For the following literal translation we are indebted to Dr. Henderson, the celebrated orientalist :—

"1. *A kid, a kid* my father bought
For two pieces of money.
A kid, a kid.

"2. Then came *the cat*, and ate the kid,
That my father bought
For two pieces of money.
A kid, a kid.

"3. Then came *the dog*, and bit the cat,
That ate the kid,

* That Ireland has not always presented so degrading and uncivilized an aspect as now exists in that unhappy country, there is abundant testimony to convince the most incredulous. Camden, an author by no means partial on this score, says :—"The Irish scholars of St. Patrick profited so notably in Christianity that, in the succeeding age, Ireland was termed '*Sanctorum Patria.*'" Their monks so excelled in learning and piety, that they sent whole flocks of most holy men into all parts of Europe, "who were founders of the most eminent monasteries both there and in Britain."

"A resident in Ireland," says a learned British writer, "like a residence now at an university, was considered as almost essential to establish a literary character." By common consent, and as a mark of pre-eminence, Ireland obtained the title of *Insula Sanctorum et Doctorum.*

At the Council of Constance, in 1417, the ambassadors from England were not allowed to rank or take any place as the ambassadors of a nation. The point being argued and conceded, that they were tributaries only to the Germans, "they claimed their rank from Henry being monarch of Ireland only, and it was accordingly granted."—*O'Halloran.*

That my father bought
For two pieces of money.
A kid, a kid.

" 4. Then came *the staff*, and beat the dog,
That bit the cat,
That ate the kid,
That my father bought
For two pieces of money.
A kid, a kid.

" 5. Then came *the fire*, and burnt the staff,
That beat the dog,
That bit the cat,
That ate the kid,
That my father bought
For two pieces of money.
A kid, a kid.

" 6. Then came *the water*, and quenched the fire,
That burnt the staff,
That beat the dog,
That bit the cat,
That ate the kid,
That my father bought
For two pieces of money.
A kid, a kid.

" 7. Then came *the ox*, and drank the water,
That quenched the fire,
That burnt the staff,
That beat the dog,
That bit the cat,
That ate the kid,
That my father bought
For two pieces of money.
A kid, a kid.

" 8. Then came *the butcher*, and slew the ox,
That drank the water,
That quenched the fire,
That burnt the staff,
That beat the dog,
That bit the cat,
That ate the kid,
That my father bought
For two pieces of money.
A kid, a kid.

" 9. Then came *the angel of death,* and killed the butcher,
That slew the ox,
That drank the water,
That quenched the fire,
That burnt the staff,
That beat the dog,
That bit the cat,
That ate the kid,
That my father bought
For two pieces of money.
A kid, a kid.

" 10. Then came *the Holy One,* blessed be He !
And killed the angel of death,
That killed the butcher,
That slew the ox,
That drank the water,
That quenched the fire,
That burnt the staff,
That beat the dog,
That bit the cat,
That ate the kid,
That my father bought
For two pieces of money.
A kid, a kid."

The following is the interpretation by P. N. Leberecht, Leipzig, 1731 :—

" 1.—The kid, which was one of the pure animals, denotes the Hebrews.

" The father, by whom it was purchased, is Jehovah, who represents Himself as sustaining this relation to the Hebrew people.

" The two pieces of money signify Moses and Aaron, through whose mediation the Hebrews were brought out of Egypt.

" 2.—The cat denotes the Assyrians, by whom the ten tribes were carried into captivity.

" 3.—The dog is symbolical of the Babylonians.

" 4.—The staff signifies the Persians.

" 5.—The fire indicates the Grecian empire under Alexander the Great.

" 6.—The water betokens the Roman, or the fourth

of the great monarchies to whose dominion the Jews were subjected.

" 7.—The ox is a symbol of the Saracens, who subdued Palestine, and brought it under the caliphate.

" 8.—The butcher that killed the ox denotes the Crusaders by whom the Holy Land was wrested out of the hands of the Saracens.

" 9.—The angel of death signifies the Turkish power, by which the land of Palestine was taken from the Franks, and to which it is still subject.

" 10.—The commencement of the tenth stanza is designed to show that God will take signal vengeance on the Turks, immediately after whose overthrow the Jews are to be restored to their own land, and live under the government of their long-expected Messiah."*

To return to illustrations less remote, and of a more familiar nature :—

An ill-bred Londoner calls a shilling a *hog*, and half a crown a *bull*. He little knows what havoc he is making with our modern theorists, who assert that nothing is worthy of belief, or ought to be relied upon, before the era of " Legitimate " or written " history." These terms corroborate and identify themselves with the most ancient of traditionary customs, long ere princes had monopolized the surface of coined money with their own images and superscriptions. They are identical with the very name of money among the early Romans, which was *pecunia ;* from *pecus*, a flock. Among the same people, it is well known, the word *stipulatio* signified the striking of a bargain, which was done by placing two straws, *stipes*, one across the other. The same mode is practised to this day in the Isle of Man, existing, in all probability, from a period earlier than the foundation of Rome itself. Is the coincidence accidental or traditional ? If the latter, what a history it tells of the migration of the species !

How much might be written of amulets, cups, and horns of magical power, from the divining cup of Genesis to the Amalthean horns and the goblet of Oberon, which he gave

* Palestine was liberated from the Turks by the British Forces under Allenby in 1917.

to Huon of Bordeaux, the supernatural power of which, passing into an hundred shapes of fiction, may be found in our baronial halls—a pledge, to a certain extent, like the invulnerability of Achilles, of the good fortune of its possessor. It is wonderful that Shakespeare, who is so happy in the verisimilitude of his fairy lore, and so apt to embellish his plot with its mythology, should not have thought of causing the king-making Earl of Warwick to lose the horn of that prodigious cow—no doubt, one of those guardian pledges bestowed upon his family—by way of presage to his fall. Deer's antlers, there can be little doubt, were placed in the halls of our forefathers, a votive offering to the Diana of the Scandinavian Pantheon; as it was the custom in like manner to ornament the temples with the heads of sacrificial victims in the Greek and Roman worship. The eagerness of our sportsmen for the "brush," as the first trophy in the chase, has in all probability originated from the same propitiatory notion.

Few would expect to meet with fragments of the worship of Juno in the racing of country girls for an inner garment, and the hunting of the pig with his tail greased; yet practised, but rapidly becoming obsolete, in wakes and other pastimes from Scotland to the Land's End.

Thus far we have examined tradition by the test of positive experience. There is still a gleaning of poetry which might be culled, in some few districts, from the "lyre of the unlettered muse." There are songs scattered up and down our own and the neighbouring counties among the population least affected by the spread of literature which are of great antiquity, and are not to be found in any books or writings now extant. A few of these might be gathered in; while to some, who love the tone and humour of the old ballads, they would be an acquisition of great value. But the intercourse between master and man, between town and country, and even amongst the learned themselves, becomes so cold and repulsive, either from increasing refinement or reserve, that there seems little hope of our finding anyone who will take the trouble to collect them, or a sufficient number of real admirers of these relics who would come forward to ensure a suitable

reward for the labour. We are sorely disgraced among foreigners for inattention to the course and progress of our own learning. No work exists, like those which illustrate and embellish the French, Italian, and German literature, which professes to give a summary view of its history. The knowledge of its antiquities, its customs, manners, laws, modes of feeling, and pursuits, except in the instances before mentioned, and a few other praiseworthy exceptions, have been shamefully obscured by an eagerness for supporting a system, the ridiculous rivalry of pretence, and by the discredit thrown upon such labour by modern pedantry. A new version of Camden, rectified by all the discoveries subsequent to his time ;—that which is found useless or erroneous left out, and the work enlightened by new researches, entered into by a number of inquirers equal in all respects to the task, and exerted over every part of the country, would very much aid the cause of learning and the future progress of our knowledge.

The following traditions, we would fain hope, will not be found quite destitute of utility. They are some addition to our existing stock of knowledge, either as illustrating English history, manners, and customs now obsolete, or as a collection of legends having truth for their basis, however disfigured in their transmission through various modifications of error, the natural obscurity arising from distance, and the distorted media through which they must necessarily be viewed. Perhaps a main source of this inaccuracy arises from the many and heterogeneous uses to which the breakings up the fragments of tradition have been subjected and applied. Like those detached yet beautiful remnants of antiquity, built up with other and absolutely worthless materials in the rude structures of the barbarian by whom they have been disfigured, traditions are generally presented to us torn from their original connection with edifices once renowned for beauty and magnificence. It is our wish, as it has been our aim, to rescue these ruins from degradation and decay. Gathered from many an uninviting heap of chaotic matter, they are now presented in a different form, and under a more popular aspect. We cannot pretend to say that we have invariably assigned to them their true origin, or that their real char-

acter and position have been ascertained. Still, we would hope that, as relics of the past rescued from the oblivion to which they were inevitably hastening, they are not either an uninteresting or inelegant addition to the literature of our country.

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SIR TARQUIN

" Within this ancient British land,
In Lancashire I understand,
Near Manchester there lived a knight of fame,
Of a prodigious strength and might,
Who vanquished many a worthy knight;
A giant great, and Tarquin was his name."

Ballad of Sir Tarquin.

As it is our intention to arrange these traditions in chronological order, we begin with the earliest upon record, the overthrow of the giant Tarquin, near Manchester, by Sir Lancelot of the Lake, who was supposed to bear rule over the western part of Lancashire.

An old ballad commemorates the achievement; and many other relics of this tradition still exist, one of which, a rude carving on a ceiling in the College at Manchester, represents the giant Tarquin at his morning's repast; it being fabled that he devoured a child daily at this meal. The legs of the infant are seen sprawling out of his mouth in a most unseemly fashion. Some have supposed that Tarquin was but a symbol or personification of the Roman army, and his Castle the Roman station in this neighbourhood.

The following extract is from Dr. Hibbert's pamphlet on the subject :—

" Upon the site of Castlefield, near Manchester, was originally erected a British fortress by the Sistuntii, the earliest possessors of Lancashire, comprising an area of twelve acres. It would possess on the south, south-east, and south-west, every advantage, from the winding of the River Medlock, and on its west, from the lofty banks which overlooked an impenetrable morass. By the artificial aid, therefore, of a ditch and a rampart on its east and north sides, this place was rendered a fortress of no inconsiderable

importance. This fell afterwards into the hands of the Brigantes, the ancient inhabitants of Durham, York, and Westmoreland. Upon the invasion of the Romans, Cereales, their general, attacked the proper Brigantes of Yorkshire and Durham, and freed the Sistuntii of Lancashire from their dominion, but reserved the former to incur the Roman yoke. In A.D. 79, this British hold was changed into a Roman castrum, garrisoned by the first Frisian cohort, who erected from the old materials a new fort on the Roman construction, part of the vallum remaining to this day. New roads were made, and the British were invited to form themselves into the little communities of cities, to check the spirit of independence kept alive in the uncivilised abodes of deserted forests. The Romans possessed the fortress for nearly 300 years, when they were summoned away to form part of the army intended to repel the myriads of barbarians that threatened to overrun Europe.

"By contributing to their refinement, and protecting them from the inroads of the Picts and Scots, the Romans were regarded in a friendly light by the ancient inhabitants, and their departure was much regretted. It became necessary, however, that the Britons should elect a chief from their own nation. Their military positions were strengthened; and as the Roman model of a fortress did not suit their military taste, instead of one encircled with walls only seven or eight feet high, and furnishing merely pavilions for soldiers within, they preferred erecting, on the sites of stations, large buildings of stone, whose chambers should contain more convenient barracks for the garrison. An infinite number of these castles existed within a century after the departure of the Romans, of which our Castle at Manchester was one, carried to a great height, erected in a good taste, secured at the entrances with gates, and flanked at the sides with towers.

"The Britons, however, unable of themselves to cope with their foes, imprudently invited the Saxons, who, after subduing the Caledonians, laid waste the country of the Britons with fire and sword. The Castle of Manchester surrendered A.D. 488."

We have endeavoured to preserve the character and manner of the ancient chroniclers, and even their fanciful

etymologies, in the following record, of which the quaint but not inelegant style, in some measure, almost unavoidably adapts itself to the subject.

Sir Lancelot of the Lake, as it is related by the older chronicles, was the son of Ban, King of Benoit, in Brittany. Flying from his castle, then straitly besieged, the fugitive king saw it in flames, and soon after expired with grief. His queen, Helen, fruitlessly attempting to save his life, abandoned for a while her infant son Lancelot. Returning, she discovered him in the arms of the nymph Vivian, the mistress of Merlin, who on her approach sprang with the child into a deep lake and disappeared. This lake is held by some to be the lake Linius, a wide insular water near the sea-coast, in the regions of Linius or "The Lake"; now called Martin Mere or *Mar-tain-moir*, "a water like the sea."

The nymph educated the infant at her court, fabulously said to have been held in the subterraneous caverns of this lake, and from hence he was styled Lancelot du Lac.

At the age of eighteen the fairy conveyed him to the camp of King Arthur, who was then waging a fierce and exterminating warfare with the Saxons. Here the young warrior was invested with the badge of knighthood. His person, accomplishments, and unparalleled bravery, having won the heart of many a fair dame in this splendid abode of chivalry and romance, his name and renown filled the land, where he was throughout acknowledged as chief of "The Knights of the Round Table."

The name of Lancelot is derived from history, and is an appellation truly British, signifying royalty, *Lanc* being the Celtic term for a spear, and *lod* or *lot* implying a people. Hence the name of Lancelot's shire, or Lancashire. From the foregoing it is supposed that he resided in the region of Linius, and that he was the

monarch of these parts, being ruler over the whole, or the greater part, of what is now called Lancashire.

Arthur, king of the Silures, being selected by Ambrosius for the command of the army, he defeated the Saxons in twelve pitched battles. Four of these were obtained, as related by Nennius, on the river called Duglas,* or Douglas, a little stream which runneth, as we are further told, in the region of Linius. On reference, it will be found that this river passes through a great portion of the western side of Lancashire, and pretty accurately fixes the position here described.

Three of these great victories were gotten near Wigan, and the other is currently reported to have been achieved near Blackrod, close to a Roman station, then probably fortified, and remaining as a place of some strength, and in possession of the Saxon invaders. Here, according to rude legends, "the River Duglas ran with blood to Wigan three days."

It was during one of the brief intervals of rest that sometimes occurred in the prosecution of these achievements that the following incident is reported to have happened. Being a passage of some note, and the earliest tradition of the county upon record, we have chosen it as the commencement of a work principally derived from traditional history.

Sir Tarquin, a cruel and treacherous knight of gigantic stature and prodigious strength, had, as the story is currently told, his dwelling in a well-fortified castle nigh to Manchester, on the site of what is yet known

* Du-glass, "the becoming, the seemly, green," described by Camden as "a small brook, running with an easy and still stream;" which conveys a good idea of the word *Du*. The Du-glass empties itself into the estuary called by Ptolemy *Bellesama, Belless-aman-e;* pronounced Violish-aune,[1] the literal meaning of which is, that the "mouth of the river only is for ships"; *i.e.*, that the rivers which form the haven are not navigable.—*Chronicles of Eri.*—*O'Connor.*

[1] Ballyshannon is evidently a very slight corruption of this term.

by the name of Castle-field. It was a place of great strength, surrounded by vast ramparts, and flanked at the corners with high and stately towers.

He had by treachery gained possession of the fortress, treating the owner, who was a British knight of no mean condition, with great cruelty and rigour. This doughty Saxon, Sir Tarquin, had, along with many of his nation, been invited over in aid of the Britons against their neighbours the Picts and Scots. These being driven back, their false allies treacherously made war upon their friends, laying waste the country with fire and sword. Then arose that noble brotherhood, "The Knights of the Round Table," who, having sworn to avenge the wrongs of their country, began to harass the intruders, and to drive them from their ill-gotten possessions.

The Saxons were no less vigilant; but many of their most puissant knights were slain or imprisoned during these encounters.

Sir Tarquin could boast of no mean success—three-score knights and four, it is said, were held in thrall by this uncourteous chieftain.

Sir Lancelot having, as the ballad quaintly expresses it,

> "A mighty giant just pulled down,
> Who lived near Shrewsbury's fair town:
> With his keen sword his life away did take."

This giant knight was called Sir Carados; and Sir Lancelot, when about betaking himself to these and similar recreations, did hear doleful tidings out of Lancashire, how that Sir Tarquin was playing the eagle in the hawk's eyrie, amongst his brethren and companions. From Winchester he rode in great haste, succouring not a few distressed damsels and performing many other notable exploits by the way, "until he came to a vast desert," "frequented by none save those whom ill fortune had permitted to wander therein."

Sir Tarquin, like the dragon of yore, entailed a desert round his dwelling ; so fierce and rapacious was he that no man durst live beside him, save that he held his life and property of too mean account, and too worthless for the taking.

The knight was pricking on his way through this almost pathless wilderness, when he espied a damsel of such inexpressible and ravishing beauty that none might behold her without the most heart-stirring delight and admiration. To this maiden did Sir Lancelot address himself, but she hid her face and fell a-weeping. He then inquired the cause of her dolour, when she bade him flee, for his life was in great jeopardy.

" Oh, Sir Knight ! " uncovering her face as she spoke, " the giant Tarquin liveth hereabout, and thou wert as good as dead should he espy thee so near his castle."

" What ! " said the knight, " and shall Sir Lancelot of the Lake flee before this false and cruel tyrant ? To this purpose am I come, that I may slay and make an end of him at once, and deliver the captives."

" Art thou, indeed, Sir Lancelot ? " said the damsel, joy suddenly starting through her tears ; " then is our deliverance nearer than we hoped for. Thy fame is gone before thee into all countries, and thy might and thy prowess, it is said, none may withstand. This evil one, Sir Tarquin, hath taken captive my true knight, who, through my cruelty, betook himself to this adventure, and now lieth in chains and foul ignominy, without hope of release, until death break off his fetters."

" Beshrew me," said Lancelot, " but I will deliver him presently, and cut off the foul tyrant's head, or lose mine own by the attempt."

Then did he follow the maiden to a river's brink, near to where, as tradition still reports, now stand the Knott Mills. Having mounted her before him on his steed, she pointed out a path over the ford, beyond which he soon espied the castle, a vast and stately building

of rugged stone, like a huge crown upon the hill-top, which presented a gentle ascent from the stream.

Now did Sir Lancelot alight, as well to assist his companion as to bethink himself what course to pursue ; but the damsel showed him a high tree, about a stone's-throw from the ditch before the castle, whereon hung a goodly array of accoutrements, with many fair and costly shields, on which were displayed a variety of gay and fanciful devices. These were the property of the knights then held in durance by Sir Tarquin. Below them all hung a copper basin, on which was carved in Latin the following inscription, translated thus :

> " Who valueth not his life a whit,
> Let him this magic basin hit."

This so enraged Sir Lancelot that he drove at the vessel violently with his spear, piercing it through and through, so vigorous was the assault. The clangour was loud, and anxiously did the knight await for some reply to his summons. Yet there was no answer, nor was there any stir about the walls or outworks. It seemed as though Sir Tarquin was his own castellan, skulking here alone, like the cunning spider watching for his prey.

Silence, with her vast and unmoving wings, appeared to brood over the place ; and echo, that gave back their summons from the walls, seemed to labour for utterance through the void by which they were encompassed. A stillness so appalling might needs discourage the hot and fiery purpose of Sir Lancelot, who, unused but to the rude clash of arms, and the melée of the battle, did marvel exceedingly at this forbearance of the enemy. But he still rode round about the fortress, expecting that someone should come forth to inquire his business, and this did he, to and fro, for a long space. As he was just minded to return from so fruitless an adventure, he saw a cloud of dust at some

distance, and presently he beheld a knight galloping furiously towards him. Coming nigh, Sir Lancelot was aware that a captive knight lay before him, bound hand and foot, bleeding and sore wounded.

"Villain!" cried Sir Lancelot, "and unworthy the name of a true and loyal knight, how darest thou do this insult and contumely to an enemy, who, though fallen, is yet thine equal? I will make thee rue this foul despite, and revenge the wrongs of my brethren of the Round Table."

"If thou be for so brave a meal," said Tarquin, "thou shalt have thy fill, and that speedily. I will first cut off thy head, and then serve up thy carcase to the Round Table; for both that and thee I do utterly defy!"

"This is over-dainty food for thy sending," replied Sir Lancelot hastily, and with that they couched their spears. The first rush was over, but man and horse had withstood the shock. Again they fell back, measuring the distance with an eager and impetuous glance and again they rushed on, as if to overwhelm each other by main strength, when, as fortune would have it, their lances shivered, both of them at once, in the rebound. The end of Sir Lancelot's spear, as it broke, struck his adversary's steed on the shoulder, and caused him to fall suddenly, as if sore wounded. Sir Tarquin leaped nimbly from off his back; which Sir Lancelot espying, he cried out:

"Now will I show thee the like courtesy; for, by mine honour and the faith of a true knight, I will not slay thee at this foul advantage." Alighting with haste they betook themselves to their swords, each guarding the opposite attack warily with his shield. That of Sir Tarquin was framed of a bull's hide, stoutly held together with thongs, and, in truth, seemed well-nigh impenetrable; whilst the shield of his opponent, being of more brittle stuff, did seem as though it would have cloven asunder with the desperate strokes of Sir Tarquin's

sword. Nothing daunted, Sir Lancelot brake ofttimes through his adversary's guard, and smote him once until the blood trickled down amain. At this sight, Sir Tarquin waxed ten times more fierce ; and summoning all his strength for the blow, wrought so lustily on the head of Sir Lancelot that he began to reel ; which Tarquin observing, by a side blow struck the sword from out his hand, with so sharp and dexterous a jerk that it shivered into a thousand fragments.

" Now yield thee, Sir Knight, or thou diest " ; and with that the cruel monster sprang upon him to accomplish his end. Still Sir Lancelot would not yield, nor sue to him for quarter, but flew on his enemy like the ravening wolf to his prey. Then were they seen hurtling together like wild bulls—Sir Lancelot holding fast his adversary's sword, so that in vain he attempted to make a thrust therewith.

" Thou discourteous churl ! give me but the vantage of a weapon like thine own, and I will fight thee honestly and without flinching."

" Nay, Sir Knight of the Round Table, but this were a merry deed withal, to help thee unto that wherewith I might perchance mount some goodly bough for the crows to peck at," replied Tarquin. Terrible and unceasing was the struggle ; but in vain the giant knight attempted to regain the use of his sword. Then Sir Lancelot, with a wary eye, finding no hope of his life save in the use or accomplishment of some notable stratagem, bethought him of the attempt to throw his adversary by a sudden feint. To this end he pressed against him heavily and with his whole might, then darting suddenly aside, Sir Tarquin fell to the ground with a loud cry ; which Sir Lancelot espying, leapt joyfully upon him, thinking to overcome his enemy ; but the latter, too cunning to be thus caught at unawares, kept his sword firmly holden, and his enemy was still unprovided with the means of defence. Now did Sir Lancelot begin to doubt what course he should

pursue, when suddenly the damsel, who, having bound up the wounds of the captive knight as he lay, and now sat a little way off watching the event, cried out with a shrill voice :

" Sir Knight, the tree : a goodly bough for the gathering." Then did Sir Lancelot remember the weapons that were there, along with the shields and the body-armour of the knights Sir Tarquin had vanquished. Starting up, ere his enemy had recovered himself, he snatched a broad falchion from the bough, and again defied him to the combat. But the fight was fiercer than before ; so that being sore wounded, and the day exceeding hot, they were after a season fain to pause for breath.

" Thou art the bravest knight I ever encountered,' said Sir Tarquin, " and I would crave thy country and thy name ; for, by my troth and the honour of my gods, I will give thee thy request on one condition, and release thy brethren of the Round Table ; for why should two knights of such pith and prowess slay each other in one day ? "

" And what is thy condition ? " inquired Sir Lancelot.

" There liveth but one, either in Christendom or Heathenesse, unto whom I may not grant this parley ; for him have I sworn to kill," said Sir Tarquin.

" 'Tis well," replied the other ; " but what name or cognisance hath he ? "

" His name is Lancelot of the Lake ! "

" Behold him ! " was the reply ; Sir Lancelot at the same time brandishing his weapon with a shout of defiance.

When Sir Tarquin heard this he gnashed his teeth for very rage.

" Now one of us must die," said he. " Thou slewest my brother, Sir Carados, at Shrewsbury, and I have sworn to avenge his defeat. Thou diest. Not all the gods of thy fathers shall deliver thee."

So to it they went with more heat and fury than ever ;

and a marvel was it to behold, for each blow did seem as it would have cleft the other in twain, so deadly was the strife and hatred between them.

Sir Lancelot pressed hard upon his foe, though himself grievously wounded, and in all likelihood would have won the fight, but, as ill-luck would have it, when dealing a blow mighty enough to fell the stoutest oak in Christendom, he missed his aim, and with that stumbled to the ground. Then did Sir Tarquin shout for joy, and would have made an end of him, but that Sir Lancelot, as he lay, aimed a deadly thrust below his enemy's shield where he was left unguarded, and quickly turned his joy into tribulation ; for Sir Tarquin, though not mortally wounded, drew back and cried out lustily for pain, the which Sir Lancelot hearing, he leapt again to his feet, still eager and impatient for the strife.

The contest was again doubtful, neither of them showing any disposition to yield, or in any wise to abate the rigour of the conflict. Night, too, was coming on apace, and seemed like enough to pitch her tent over them ere the issue was decided. But an event now fell out which, unexpectedly enough, terminated this adventure. From some cause arising out of the haste and rapidity of the strokes, one of these so chanced, that both their swords were suddenly driven from out of their right hands ; stooping together, by some subtlety or mistake, they exchanged weapons. Then did Sir Lancelot soon find his strength to increase, whilst his adversary's vigour began to abate ; and in the end Sir Lancelot slew him, and with his own sword cut off his head. He then perceived that the giant's great strength was by virtue of his sword ; and that it was through his wicked enchantments therewith he had been able to overcome, and had wrought such disgrace on the Knights of the Round Table. Sir Lancelot forthwith took the keys from the giant's girdle, and proceeded to the release of the captive knights, first unbinding

the prisoner, who yet lay in a piteous swoon hard by. But there was a great outcry and lamentation when that he saw his own brother, Sir Erclos, in this doleful case ; for it was he whom the cruel Tarquin was leading captive when he met the just reward of his misdeeds.

After administering to his relief, Sir Lancelot rode up to the castle-gate, but found no entrance thereby. The drawbridge was raised, and he sought in vain the means of giving the appointed signal for its descent.

But the damsel showed him a secret place where hung a little horn. On this he blew a sharp and ringing blast, when the bridge presently began to lower, and instantly to adjust itself across the moat ; whereon, hastening, he unlocked the gate. But here he had nigh fallen into a subtle snare, by reason of an ugly dwarf that was concealed in a side niche of the wall. He was armed with a ponderous mace ; and had not the maiden drawn Sir Lancelot aside by main force, he would have been crushed in its descent, the dwarf aiming a deadly blow at him as he passed. It fell, instead, with a loud crash on the pavement, and broke into a thousand fragments. Thereupon, Sir Lancelot smote him with the giant's sword, and hewed the mischievous monster asunder without mercy. Turning towards the damsel, he beheld her form suddenly change, and she vanished from his sight : then was he aware that it had been the nymph Vivian who accompanied him through the enchantments he had so happily subdued. He soon released his brethren, and great was the joy at the Round Table when the knights returned to the banquet.

THE GOBLIN BUILDERS

" By well and rills, in meadows green,
We nightly dance our heyday guise ;
And to our fairy king and queen
We chant our moonlight minstrelsies.
When larks 'gin sing,
Away we fling,
And babes new-born we steal as we go,
And elf in bed
We leave instead,
And wend us laughing, ho, ho, ho ! "—

BEN JONSON.

THE story which serves for the basis of the following legend will be easily recognized in the neighbourhood where the transactions are said to have occurred, though probably not known beyond its immediate locality.

The accessories are gathered from a number of sources : and the great difficulty the author has had to encounter in getting at what he conceives the real state and character of the time, together with the history of contemporary individuals and events, so as to give a natural picture of the manners and customs of that remote era, can be known by those only who have entered into pursuits of this nature. In this and in the succeeding legends he has attempted to illustrate and portray the customs of that particular epoch to which they relate, as well as to detail the events on which they are founded.

It may be interesting to notice that a similar exploit is recorded in the Scandinavian Legends, and may be traced, under many variations of circumstances and events, in the Icelandic, Danish, and Norwegian poetry, affording another intimation of the source from whence our popular mythology is derived.

TOWARDS the latter end of the reign of William, the Norman conqueror, Gamel, the Saxon Thane, Lord of

Recedham or " Rached," being left in the quiet possession of his lands and privileges by the usurper, " minded," as the phrase then was, " for the fear of God and the salvation of his immortal soul, to build a chapel unto St. Chadde," nigh to the banks of the Rache or Roach. For this pious use a convenient place was set apart. lying on the north bank of the river, in a low and sheltered spot now called " The Newgate." Piles of timber and huge stones were gathered thither in the most unwonted profusion ; insomuch, that the building seemed destined for some more ambitious display than the humble edifices called churches then exhibited, of which but few existed in the surrounding districts.

The foundations were laid. The loose and spongy nature of the soil required heavy stakes to be driven, upon and between which were laid several courses of rubble-stone, ready to receive the grouting or cement. Yet in one night was the whole mass conveyed, without the loss of a single stone, to the summit of a steep hill on the opposite bank, and apparently without any visible marks or signs betokening the agents or means employed for its removal. It did seem as though their pathway had been the viewless air, so silently was all track obliterated. Great was the consternation that spread among the indwellers of the four several clusters of cabins dignified by the appellation of villages, and bearing, with their appendages, the names of Castletown, Spoddenland, Honorsfield, and Buckland. With dismay and horror this profanation was witnessed. The lord, more especially, became indignant. This daring presumption—this wilful outrage, so like bidding defiance to his power, bearding the lion even in his den, was deemed an offence calling for signal vengeance upon the perpetrators.

At the cross in Honorsfield a proclamation was recited, to the intent, that unless the offending parties were forthwith given up to meet the punishment that might be awarded to their misdeeds, a heavy mulct would follow,

and the unfortunate villains and *bordarii* be subject to such further infliction as might still seem wanting to assuage their lord's displeasure. Now this was a grievous disaster to the unhappy vassals, seeing that none could safely or truly accuse his neighbour. All were agreed that human agency had no share in the work. The wiser part threw out a shrewd suspicion, that the old deities whom their forefathers had worshipped, and whose altars had been thrown down and their sacrifices forbidden, had burst the thraldom in which they were aforetime held by the Christian priests, and were now brooding a fearful revenge for the many insults they had endured. But the decree from the lord was hasty, and the command urgent ; so that a council was holden for the devising of some plan for their relief.

Hugh de Chadwycke and John de Spotland were subordinate lords, or feudatories, holding fortified dwellings, castelets, or peels, in the manor of Rochdale : the former had builded his rude mansion of massive timber, for the double purpose of habitation and defence, on a bold eminence, forming a steep bank of the river, about a mile from the Thane's castle. Claiming a relationship to the lord, he was in some measure privileged above his friend De Spotland, yet was the latter a personage of considerable power and influence at the manor court. To these men when their aid was necessary, either as counsellors or intercessors, did the inhabitants generally repair.

Hugh de Chadwycke was a man of mild and grave deportment, but politic withal, and wary of counsel. John de Spotland was of a more bold and open temper. De Chadwycke suggested a submissive application to the Thane, with a pledge that all possible diligence should be used for the fulfilment of his demands. John urged the removal of the materials with all expedition to their original site, a watch being set to discover the delinquents, should they again presume to lay hands

on the stuff. The wisdom and propriety of the latter precaution was undisputed ; but no one seemed willing to undergo the terrible ordeal, each declining the office in deference to his more privileged neighbour. No wonder at their reluctance to so unequal a contest. To be strangled or torn limb from limb was the slightest punishment that could be expected for this daring profanation ; yet, unless they had witnesses, bodily, to these diabolical exploits, it were needless to attempt excusing themselves before the haughty chieftain. He would visit with fearful severity all their endeavours to deceive, nor would he credit their belief, unless it were confirmed by the testimony of an eye-witness. How to procure this desirable source of intelligence was a question that was hourly becoming more difficult to solve.

Slow and melancholy was their return, while with fear and hesitation they communicated the result.

" Now shame befall thee, Adam of Wills ! " said a stout woman to one of the speakers ; " thou wert ever a tough fighter ; and the cudgel and ragged staff were as glib in thine hands as a beggar's pouch on alms-days. Show thy mettle, man. I'll spice thee a jug of barley-drink, an' thou be for the bout this time."

" Nay," returned Adam. " I'll fight Beelzebub if he be aught I can hit ; but these same boggarts, they say, a blow falls on 'em like raindrops on a mist, or like beating the wind with a corn-flail. I cannot fight with naught, as it were."

" Shame on thee, Hal ! " said a shrill-tongued, crooked little body, arrayed in a coarse grey hood, and holding a stick, like unto a one-handed crutch, of enormous dimensions. " Shame on thee ! I would watch myself, but the night-wind sits indifferently on my stomach, and I am too old now for these moonshine lifts."

She cast her little bleared eyes, half-shut and distilling contempt, on the cowardly bystanders.

" Now, if there be not old Cicely," first went round in a whisper ; then a deep silence gradually pervaded the assembly.

She had just hobbled down to the cross, and the audience seemed to watch her looks with awe and suspicion.

" What, none o' ye ? Come, Uctred, thou shalt shame these big-tongued, wide-mouthed boasters."

A short, swarthy-looking boy, with a leering and unfavourable countenance, here stepped forward, taking his station upon one of the steps beside his mother. A notion had gone abroad that the boy was the fruit of some unhallowed intercourse with an immortal of the fairy or pixy kind, whose illicit amours the old woman had wickedly indulged. She, too, was thought to bear in some degree a charmed life, and to hold communion with intelligences not of the most holy or reputable order. The boy was dumb. His lips had, however, at times a slight and tremulous movement, which strongly impressed the beholders that some discourse was then carrying on between " the dummy," as he was generally called, and his invisible relatives. His whole aspect was singularly painful and forbidding. No wonder, in these times of debasing superstition, that his person should be looked on with abhorrence, and even a touch from him be accounted an evil of no slight import. His mother alone had the power of communicating with him, or of understanding his grimaces.

" Now what will you give me for the use of his pretty eyes this lucky night ? The Thane will have regard to his testimony, though all that have free use of the tongue he holds to be liars and dishonest. Never lied this youth by sign or token ! "

A buzz went through the company, and the dame and her boy again sat down to await the issue. All eyes were directed towards them, timidly and by stealth, as the consultation grew louder and more continuous.

A pause at length ensued. Some three or four of

the group drew towards the crone, who sat almost double, her chin resting on the neb of her crutch.

"Now will we give thee two changes of raiment, together with a mess of barley-pottage; and every year thou shalt have a penny at Easter, and a fat hen at Shrovetide."

"Good," said the greedy beldame, "but I'll have a sheepskin cap for the boy, and a horn spoon." This demand was also granted; after which she made signs to the lad, who swung his head to and fro, at the same time distorting his features with a wild and terrible rapidity. It was evident that he understood the nature of these proceedings. A glance, like that of mockery and derision, he cast towards the crowd; and when Mother Cicely was returning, he threw back upon them a look of scorn and malignity which made the beholders shrink aside with horror.

The people now addressed themselves to the task of replacing the heavy materials, and ere night the greater part were withdrawn, ready to begin with the foundations again on the morrow.

A sort of rude shelter was constructed, wherein Uctred was to keep watch until daylight.

The morning came, calm and beautiful over the grey hills; and the anxious inhabitants, awake betimes, did each turn his first steps towards the river's brink. With horror and amazement they again beheld the ground bare. Not a vestige remained, nor was there any trace of the boy.

"He is gone to his own," said they, as a general shudder went through the crowd: "and the fairies have gotten him at last."

Every heart seemed quailing with some hidden fear; nor could any means at that moment be suggested for their emancipation.

The stones and timber were again found, as before, on the opposite hill. Fifty stout men had with difficulty contrived to fetch them from thence the day preceding,

and twice that number would hardly have sufficed to transport them thither. It was not to be gainsayed that a power superior to their own was the agent in removals so mysterious. Nothing now remained but to acquaint their lord with this second interruption; and their diligence in performing this duty, they hoped might exculpate them from the heavy doom they had incurred. Some of the wiser and more stout-hearted were chosen to carry these tidings to the Thane, hoping to clear themselves from the ban, as well as to return with commands for their future proceedings.

Gamel de Recedham, or Rochdale, had his dwelling in the ancient castle built by the Romans on the verge of a steep hill jutting into the valley of the Roach. It was a place difficult of access, save on the southern side, where a wide ditch formed an effectual defence, and over which a narrow bridge admitted only two abreast in front of the outer gate. It was now, in some places, fast going to decay, but enough remained out of its vast bulk to form a dwelling for the Saxon and his followers. It had been once fortified throughout; the castle, or keep, being four-square, flanked at the corners with stone towers. The lower part of the walls was composed of large pebbles mixed with brick, and held together by a firm cement. Higher up, and continued to the summit, were alternate rows of brick and freestone. The corners were faced with stone, making a very formidable appearance when guarded by slingers and throwers of darts, who were stationed there only in times of great peril.

Passing the vallum, or outer defence, they ascended a narrow staircase outside the keep, where the cringing serfs were admitted by four of the lord's Norman bowmen, who ushered them into the audience-chamber. Some of the Thane's men were habited in coats of mail, made of small pieces of iron, cut round at the bottom, and set on a leathern garment, so as to fold over each other like fish-scales, the whole bending with the

greatest ease, and yet affording a sufficient protection to the wearer.

The chamber of audience was situated at the uppermost part of the keep, and great was the apprehension of the intruders whilst following their guides through the winding passages and gloomy staircases leading to the inner cell occupied by their chief. The disposition of the armed men—their warlike habiliments, and the various and uncouth weapons which seemed to threaten terror and defiance, were all objects to them of apprehension and distrust. The walls of this gloomy apartment were lined with thin bricks, ornamentally disposed in herring-bone work, after the fashion of the time. The windows, though narrow on the outside, were broad and arched within, displaying a rude sort of taste in their construction. Round the walls were groups of weapons, ostentatiously displayed ; two-edged broadswords ; long spears, some barbed and others flat and broad ; shields, the oldest of which were large, and had a sharp point projecting from the centre ; others, of the Norman and more recent fashion, were smaller, and of an oval shape. Battle-axes, lances, and javelins, were strewn about in formidable profusion. Hauberks, or chain-mail, hung at intervals from the walls, looking grim and stalwart from their repose, like the headless trunks of the warriors they had once encompassed.

A broad curtain, curiously embroidered, covered one end of the room, from behind which crept a page or henchman, in gay attire, his tunic glistening with his lord's device.

The serfs bowed with the most abject submission to this representative of their lord, who lived in the customary style of barbarous and feudal pomp, which the manners of their Norman invaders had rather contributed to increase than to diminish.

" Tell thy master," said their companion, " that some of the folk would speak with him, touching the matter by which they are in jeopardy."

Smoothing his locks and trimming down his garments, the boy departed. It was long or ere the audience was granted; in the meantime, they stood trembling and oppressed with an evil foreboding for the result, the known hasty and impetuous temper of the Saxon rendering it a matter of some doubt, and no small hazard, as to what might be the issue of their conference. Suddenly was heard the clanking of armour, and the tramp of nailed feet, announcing his approach; the heavy arras was uplifted, and Gamel the Thane stood before them. He was richly attired in a loose coat reaching down to his ankles; over this was a long robe, fastened over both shoulders and on the breast with a silver buckle. The edges were trimmed with gold and knots of flowers interwoven with pearls and rare stones. On his head he wore a coronet, or rim of gold, enriched with jewels; and his bushy hair and grizzled beard looked still more grim and forbidding beneath these glittering ornaments. His eyes were quick and piercing; his cheeks pale and slightly furrowed. A narrow and retreating mouth, firmly drawn in, showed the bent of his disposition to be fierce and choleric, and his wrath not easily turned aside. He was accompanied by his billmen, together with some half-dozen attendants, clad in shirts of chain-mail and helmets fitting close to the head. These bore lances after the Norman fashion then prevailing over the ruder customs of their Saxon predecessors.

The more polished manners of the Norman's court had early pervaded the ranks of the nobles; and even the few hereditary Saxon chiefs left in possession of their ancient sovereignties, thought their domains cheaply purchased by their obsequious show of homage to their king.

The Thane's chief henchman occupied the post of honour, whilst a little footpage stood by his master's elbow.

The villains prostrated themselves,

"How now!—Where are the caitiffs I commanded of ye? I vow to the Virgin and St. Chadde, your own necks shall swing from the tower in their stead, should ye fail in that which I require at your hands."

The trembling hearers were afraid to answer—their lips quivered, and each tongue seemed to refuse its office. Gamel proceeded:

"What! come ye to fawn and whine out my purpose? Now will I make your chastisement ten times hotter for this intent. Lodge these knaves, Nicholas, i' the further dungeon, till they be reprieved by the rogues who are yet at large and defying our power:—they hold it somewhat cheap, methinks, when they value it less than the pampering of their own wantonness and sport."

Nicholas was herald, bedellus, or chief crier, to the lord of the manor, his office being to make proclamations at the court and the cross, where the use of his capacious lungs was oft in request. He was hangman, too, upon occasion, being never so well pleased as when employed in the due chastisement of his master's lieges. He was, moreover, a man of infinite humour, generally consoling his dear unfortunates under their visitations by some coarse and galling jest.

"Now, Adam of Hunersfield, art thou at thy prayers already?—I'll shrive thee quick. Master, shall I give the rogues any victuals? They'll not keep else till hanging time; best finish now—needless to waste provender."

"Give them the prison allowance. But, hark thee, no stripes, Nicholas," said the chief, well aware of his flagellant propensities.

"Eh!" replied he; "but black cake and dried beans don't mix well i' the stomach without riddling."

"Peace, sirrah!" replied the chieftain with a frown. Nicholas, though a licensed jester and in especial favour, knew there was a boundary beyond which he durst not pass; he became silent, therefore, at this command. The lamentations of the unwary hostages were loud but

unavailing. Nicholas prepared his manacles, and was leading them from the chamber, when the page whispered in his master's ear.

"Stop," cried the Thane: "know ye aught of the boy who was a-watching yesternight?"

"We know nothing of the lad, as we hope for deliverance," said the terrified rustics.

"Bring in the woman!"

The command was followed by the entrance of Cicely. Leaning on her crutch, she bent lowly before the chief.

"Hast thou any suit or accusation to prefer against these men, as touching thy boy?"

"Oh, my lord!" said the dame, weeping, "I never aforetime knew him missing; and he has slept i' the Killer Dane, where the great battle was fought below the castle. He has watched i' the 'Thrutch,' where the black dog haunts from sunset till cockcrow. He has leapt over the fairies' ring and run through the old house at Gozlewood, and no harm has befallen him; but he is now ta'en from me—cast out, maybe, into some noisome pit. The timbers and stones are leapt on to the hill again, but my boy is not there!"

She wept and wrung her withered hands.

"Hast thou any witness against these men?"

"Oh, my lord! they bribed me with their gifts that I should suffer the boy to watch; and I am poor, and I thought he wore a charmed life, and the little hoard would be a comfort and a stay in my old age."

"Thou hast done wickedly in this," said the lord. "Howbeit, I will keep them in the stocks; peradventure it may quicken the wits of their outdoor friends to find out the mover of these scurvy pranks. The post and timbers would not go up hill unless some knave had holpen to lift them."

Nicholas was departing to the indulgence of his favourite pastime, when a loud hubbub was heard without, and presently a fellow was pushed in by the

pressure of the crowd upon his shoulders; but they drew back, on finding the immediate presence of their chief.

This man was accounted the most notorious idler in the neighbourhood, hight "Barnulf with the nose." His eyes looked red and swollen, and his senses had become muddled and obtuse with long steeping. Silence was immediately enforced, while the assembly anxiously awaited the interrogation of this intolerable coveter of barley-drink.

"Art thou again at thy freaks?" said the Thane, angrily; "thou hast soon forgotten the stocks and the whipping-post on Easter-day. It was well that Nicholas should refresh thy memory in this matter."

At this dreaded name the poor wretch fell on his face.

"Please ye, my lord," said he, hardly raising his head from the floor, "I am here but for a witness beliken. I am breeding of no broil, save an' my gossip o' yester-night drew me into a tussle with old Split-Feet and his company."

He groaned, but not without considerable effort, and his face puckered in a heap at the recollection.

"What!—the foul fiend helped thee to thy liquor, I trow?" said Gamel, hastily. "Think not to foist thy fooleries upon me. Should I find thee with a lie on thy tongue, the hide were as well off thy shoulders. To thy speech—quick, what sawest thou?"

"I will give it all withouten a word but what the blessed saints would avouch," said the terrified suppli-cant, whose once fiery face was now blanched, or rather dyed of a dull and various blue.

"I was wending home from Merland, where I had been helping Dan the smith to his luckpenny, when as I took the path-road down yonder unlucky hill to the ford, not thinking of the de'il's workmen that had flown off with the church the night before, I was whistling, or, it mayhap, singing—or—or——I am not just par-ticular to know how it was, for the matter of it; but

at any rate I was getting up, having tumbled down the steep almost nigh to the bottom, and I thought my eyes had strucken fire, for I saw lights frisking and frolicking up and down the hill. Then I sat down to watch and, sure enough, such a puck-fisted rabble, without cloak or hosen, I never beheld—all hurry-scurry up the hill, and some of the like were on the gallop down again. They were shouting, and mocking, and laughing, like so many stark-mad fools at a May-feast. They strid twenty paces at a jump, with burdens that two of the best oxen about the manor had not shifted the length of my thumbnail. 'Tis some unlucky dream, said I, rubbing the corners of my eyes, and trying to pinch myself awake. Just then I saw a crowd of the busiest of 'em running up from the river, and making directly towards the steep bank below where I sat. They were hurrying a great log of timber, which they threw down close beside me, as if to rest ere they mounted. 'My friends,'—what should ail me to talk to 'em I cannot tell,—'My friends, but ye seem to have more work in your hands than wit in your noddles —ye might have spared yourselves the labour, I trow.' With that the whole rout turned upon me with a shout and a chattering that would have dumbfounded the shrillest tongue in the whole hundred—the mill-wheel was nothing to it. I would have escaped, but my feet were holden like as they had been i' the stocks. One, the foremost of the crew—I do think he had a long tail and gaping hoofs, but I was over-frightened to see very clear—came with a mocking, malicious grin, his tongue lolling out, and his eyes glaring and fiend-like.

"'Pray, good friend,' said he, pulling off a little black bonnet, 'be compassionate enough to help us with our load to the hill-top.' Now was I terrified beyond measure, insomuch that I made a desperate tug, whereby loosening myself, I ran like the wind, the wicked fiends following and roaring after me with loud and bitter curses. I jumped into the river, in

my hurry, having missed the ford, and I heard 'em still shouting, and, as I thought, pursuing me ; but the Virgin and St. Chadde were my helpers, for when Biddy opened the door in the morning, I lay there in a great swoon, with my head bruised, and a hole in my good grey cloak."

"And so thou comest here a-boasting of thy drunken discoveries," said the Thane. "Thou shalt wish thou hadst not gotten thee so soon from the fiend's clutches. A spice of old Nicholas' vocation may not be amiss ; yet, by way of relish to thy tale——"

The agony of the culprit was loud and appalling, but the chief was inexorable, until his denunciations were interrupted by a stranger, who craved a short respite for the groaning supplicant.

He was meanly clad : a coarse cloak, stained and threadbare, was thrown open, showing a close habit of the most ordinary fabric ; yet a natural and graceful bearing imparted a dignity even to his poor and worthless habiliments.

"I am a stranger, and sore oppressed with long travel. Penury and misfortune have been my lot, and I am driven from place to place without a home or a morsel of bread. Last night, long after the curfew, I came hither, but no *hospitium* or religious house being near, I sat down by the hill-side yonder, until morning should enable me to crave help for my hopeless journey. The morning had not dawned ere I awoke—a loud trampling, and a rush of many voices had broken in upon my slumbers. I beheld crowds of strange-looking men, laden with terrific burdens. They seemed to be eagerly and earnestly at work, under heavier loads than I thought mortal man could sustain ; the whole space, too, as far as the eye might carry, seemed alive with them, the flickering of their torches forming a scene of almost unimaginable splendour. Right before me were a number of these labourers, hauling up a heavy beam from the river ; others were apparently crossing, laden

with materials no less bulky and intractable. All were in motion, wriggling along like so many ants on a hillock. The party just before me stayed immediately below where I sat, watching their proceedings with no little curiosity and amazement. They threw down their load,—then pausing, appeared to view with some hesitation the steep bank above them. The foremost of the group now came softly towards me. Pulling off his bonnet, with a grave and beseeching aspect, he craved help to accomplish the ascent. Not then dreaming of goblins and their deceitful glamour, I put my shoulder to the work with a right good will; and truly it were a marvel to watch the tough beam, how it seemed to obey the impulse. I worked with all the might I could muster, but it appeared as though little were needful; and in a trice we scrambled to the top, when the whole party scampered off, leaving me to follow or not, as I chose. I saw something tossed towards me, which glistened as it lay at my feet. Stooping, I found a silver ring, beauteously bedecked with one glowing crystal. Round the rim is formed a quaint legend, bearing a fair device, which some learned clerk may perchance decipher."

The stranger drew from his finger a massy ring. A little ferret-eyed monk, a transcriber of saints' legends and Saxon chronicles, was immediately called. He pronounced the writing heathenish, and of the Runic form. A sort of free translation may be given as follows:

"The Norman shall tread on the Saxon's heel,
And the stranger shall rule o'er England's weal;
Through castle and hall, by night or by day,
The stranger shall thrive for ever and aye;
But in Rached, above the rest,
The stranger shall thrive best."

Gamel was troubled and perplexed. The words were prophetic, evidently pointing to his own and his country's

fate, as well as to the destiny of the stranger. He knit his brows, and his very beard coiled upwards with the conflict. He appeared loth to allow of a supernatural agency in the affair, and yet the testimony and its witness were not to be gainsayed.

"I had not believed the tale, stranger, if this token had not confirmed thy speech:—verily thou hast a better witness than a fool's tongue to thy story. That ill-omened losel may depart. See thou fall not hastily into the like offence, else shalt thou smart from Childermas to All-hallowtide. Hence! to thy place." Barnulf awaited not further dismissal, glad to escape the scrutiny of Nicholas with a whole skin.

A loud shriek was heard from the courtyard.

"My boy!—Oh, my boy!" cried the almost frantic mother, as she rushed into the chamber, leading in Uctred. He had been discovered on removing some of the huge piles of timber again from the hill, where, under a curiously-supported covering of beams and other rude materials, he lay, seemingly asleep. The urchin looked as malicious and froward as ever, even when standing before his chief.

"And where hast thou been, my pretty bird?" said the old woman, as she began her vocabulary of signs. But the boy looked surly and would not answer to the signal: he drew down his black swarthy brows, looking eagerly and fiercely from behind their bushy curtains. Suddenly, and with a fearful yell, he sprang forward, snatching the ring which Gamel was then giving back to the stranger. With a wild and hideous laugh, which sent a shudder through the assembly, he drew it on his finger. At this moment the expression of his countenance began to change, and some of the bystanders over whom fear had probably waved the wand of the enchanter, saw his form dilate, and his whole figure expand into almost gigantic proportions. A thick haze rolled through the apartment; then was heard a wild, unearthly shout, and the vision had disappeared.

"Seize him!" cried Gamel.

The guards, trembling, prepared to execute his commands, but on gaining the outworks of the castle, no vestige remained of his appearance, save a slight whirlwind of dust, like a mist-wreath, curling down the valley, which, to their terrified apprehensions, became the chariot of the departing demon. Nothing could shake this belief; and in after ages the boy was spoken of as a changeling, left by some fairy, whose appointed sojourn had been then accomplished, the means for his release being fulfilled. Old Cicely became nigh crazed with the loss of her son; but Gamel, seriously pondering on these events, sought counsel from the "Holy Church." It was therein resolved that the intended site should be removed, and the "*unknown*" by such removal appeased. The chapel of St. Chadde was accordingly built on the hill-top, where the church now stands, and unto which the foundations had been so marvellously conveyed. One hundred and twenty-four steps were dug to accomplish the ascent, and enable the good people to go to prayers. Connected with these, the tradition still exists; and unto this day it is here observed, that "*Strangers prosper in the town of Rochdale; but the natives are generally unfortunate in their undertakings.*"

MAB'S CROSS

" A pilgrim came from o'er the sea
Benedicite ! benedicite !
And he brought a ring to that proud ladye.
His grave is wide, his grave is deep ;
On that bosom cold he shall quietly sleep :
Benedicite ! "

The following extract from the genealogical roll of the Bradshaighs is the principal source from whence this tale has originated :—

" Sir William Bradshaighe, second son to Sir John, was a great traveller and a souldger, and married to Mabell, daughter and sole heire of Hugh Norris de Haghe and Blackrode, and had issue, &c."

Of this Mabel is a story by tradition of undoubted verity, " that in Sir Wm. Bradshaghe absence (beinge 10 years away in the holy wars), she married a Welsh knight. Sir William, returning from the wars, came in a palmer's habitt amongst the poor to Haghe, who, when she saw and congetringe that he favoured her former husband, wept, for which the knight chastised her ; at which Sir William went and made himself known to his tenants ; in which space the knight fled, but neare to Newton Parke Sir William overtook him and sleu him. The said Dame Mabell was enjoined by her confessor to doe penances by going onest every week barefout and barelegged to a crosse ner Wigan from the Haghe, wilest she lived, and is called Mabb ‡ to this day ; and ther monument lyes in Wigan church, as you see them ther portry'd."

Sir William Bradshaigh was outlawed during the space of a year and a day for this offence ; but he and his lady, it is said, lived happily together afterwards until their death. Their effigies on the tomb now exist but as rude and unshapely masses ; time and whitewash, the two great

destroyers of our monumental relics, having almost obliterated their form, the one by diminishing, and the other by adding to, their substance.

That Sir William was at the "Holy Wars," must, it is evident, be a corruption of the story, seeing he was born about the year 1280, ten years after the last of these unfortunate expeditions. The first croisade was undertaken by Peter the Hermit, 1095; a second, by Louis VII. of France, 1145; a third, under Richard I. of England, 1190; a fourth, under Philip II. of France, 1204; a fifth, under Louis IX., against Egypt, 1248; and the last, under Louis IX., against Tunis, where he lost his life, 1270. Consequently, the perpetration of these "Holy" murders, which it is supposed were to the amount of two hundred millions of human beings, without the acquisition even of Jerusalem to the Church, must have ceased ere the birth of our "pilgrim." That he was at "the wars," however, is pretty certain, but they were nearer home. The machinations of that powerful noble, Thomas, Earl of Lancaster, together with the disastrous campaign of Edward II. against the Scots, are sufficiently important events to account for the long absence of Sir William Bradshaigh, who is supposed to have been taken prisoner during these unhappy troubles.

In the borough of Wigan, near one of the four gates, called Standishgate—which gates are now removed, and their places occupied by some undignified-looking posts called "toll-bars"—stands a ruined stone cross; in appearance, by no means either interesting or remarkable: it would scarcely be noticed by a casual observer. Yet to this mean-looking memorial of our faith is attached an eventful story, at which

"The sad might laugh; the merry weep."

It is a tale of which our brief limits will only allow a rapid sketch. This we have thrown together in the dramatic and narrative form, a combination more calculated than any other, we believe, to awaken

attention, and bring forth the subject before the mind with truth and distinctness.

One stormy night, in the autumn of the year 1324, mine host of the Merry Maypole, a tavern of great resort by the market-cross in the good borough of Wigan, was awakened from a laborious slumber. The door which opened into a low porch projecting from the thatch, was shaken with a vehemence that threatened some fearful catastrophe. Giles, no longer able to endure these thundering appeals to his hospitality, desired his wife to ascertain the cause of the disturbance.

"Gramercy! An' I be to unlatch for every graceless unthrift that chooses to pummel at Giles Dauber's wicket, I shall have but sorry bedding wi' an old husband."

"Old, quotha!—Old! I tell thee, dame, that I'm less by a good score of winters than Dan o' the higher Wient, when he wed old Simon's daughter. Humph!—She was a merry and a buxom lass; but thou——"

How far this interesting dialogue between the tavern-keeper and his newly-wedded spouse might have extended it is impossible with any degree of accuracy to set forth, inasmuch as another loud and desperate lunge, extenuated to an inaudible mutter the testy rejoinder of "Giles o' the Maypole"; this being the cognomen by which he was more familiarly designated.

"Anan!" shouted he, "what the—— Save us!" he continued in a low whisper, crossing himself, "I had nigh slipped an ugly word over my tongue; and if it should be—Dame, I say get up, and——"

"Nay, thou hast gotten thee two as nimble legs, by thine own reckoning, as any knave i' the borough. I shall e'en keep to my bed, goodman, though these guzzle-throats hammer till cock-crow. They are at the right side of the door, I trow."

Now, mine host of the Merry Maypole having taken to himself that last and worst of all possible plagues for the remnant of his days, to wit, a young and some-

what handsome-looking wife, thought it no less meet than reasonable, and no less reasonable than a duty, at all times incumbent, that the before-named helpmate should, if need were, get out of bed, and unlatch the wicket whenever good customers were astir; more particularly as the first Dame Daubers, having the fear of a short but tough cudgel upon her, did, at certain times and seasons, when there was the requisite occasion, leave her liege lord to the enjoyment of his warm and luxurious couch, and spread a table for the entertainment of many a night-betrayed traveller.

It was the first exigency of the kind, since the marriage of Giles Dauber to Madge Newsome of the Deercote, in which the discussion of a point so knotty and important had occurred. Giles dreamt not of the vast difference that exists in the nature and docility of divers women. He heard with a sort of incredulous surprise the first incipient grumblings in contravention of his authority; but when these had fairly shaped themselves into open defiance, he started agape with wonder. Recovering himself, with a stern and portentous silence, he jumped out of bed and drew on his doublet and hose. While thoughts of relentless import were brooding, he groped his way down the ladder that communicated with the lower apartment, for the purpose of ascertaining the quality and condition of the stranger. The latter still manifested a noisy impatience at being suffered, in so inhospitable a manner, to linger without. The night was rainy and tempestuous—Giles shivered to the backbone as he trod on the wheezing rushes strewed over the floor; they were yet damp and dirty, by reason of the many visitors who had that night loitered long at the Merry Maypole.

"Holloa, friend!—thy name?" shouted Giles, placing his hand on the latch.

"Open the door, for the love of mercy!" cried a strange voice. Giles drew back; he liked not this salutation—more, by token, from the adjurement being for

the love of mercy, in lieu of an appeal to the tinkling angels that generally lined a traveller's pouch.

"Some sturdy beggar or mendicant friar," thought he, "that knocks at my door because the chantry gates are shut. I care not to open my door to every losel that knocks," cried he aloud. "Hence! I know thee not."

"Goodman, give me a night's lodging, and I will reward thee"—the door flew open at this intimation—"with a palmer's benison," continued the stranger, advancing towards the wan embers that yet flickered on the hearth. Had Giles awaited the finishing of this sentence ere the latch was loosened, some other and more hospitable roof had enjoyed the benefit of that night's adventure.

"Thanks are not over meet for a cool stomach," growled the disappointed tapster; whilst his guest roused the decaying faggots into a faint and unsteady blaze.

Giles surveyed the new-comer with no very sanguine prepossessions in his behalf. The figure that met his scrutiny was clad in a dark cloak. The hood, partly thrown back, showed a somewhat "frosty poll," though the vivacity of a wild and restless eye, peering from under his dark and luxuriant brow, would scarcely have betokened an age at which the coming winter of life usually scatters these chill warnings of its approach. His features were finely moulded. A weather-beaten cheek, mingling with a complexion evidently sallow, gave a rich autumnal hue to his visage: a slight furrow extending from the outer angle of the nostril around each corner of a narrow and retreating mouth, gave a careless expression of scorn to the countenance when at rest; but, as he smiled, this sinister aspect disappeared, and the soft gleam of benevolence which succeeded looked the brighter from the portentous scowl that had just passed. His beard was grey, and of a most reverent equipment, well calculated to excite veneration and respect. He was above the middle size:

his humble garb but ill concealed a majesty of deportment indicating a disposition rather to command than to solicit favours. He seated himself on a low stool, and honest Giles, whose courage did not feel sufficiently invigorated, in the presence of this proud palmer, to dare an open warfare, began hostilities covertly, in manner as follows :

" What ails ye, to disturb honest folks i' their beds at these hours ? You might ha' tarried in your last baiting-place—at any rate till the kye were astir. I wonder the guard let you pass at the gate. But since these evil days have o'ershadowed the land, every braggart has licence to do as he list ; and the monks and the friars, with their whole crew of dubs and deputies, are the worst of all. Old Cliderhow here, the parson, thought to have waged war with his betters ; but he was a slight matter mistaken : we whipt him up by the heels for his treason."

" Is Cliderhow alive ? " inquired the stranger.

" Save us, pilgrim ! where had you knowledge of the traitor ? "

" Our good king Edward," continued the guest, apparently not attending to Giles's question in reply, " is still sorely beset with his enemies. Had a score of knaves such as Master Cliderhow been hanged long ago, his reign had been less burdensome both to prince and people."

" It's twelve years—ay, twelve," said Giles, reckoning the lapse on his fingers ; " I know it by the great wind that beat down Master Markland's barn wall at the Meadows, since Cliderhow's sermon, inciting the whole parish to rebellion."

" I know it," replied the palmer : " he was in prison when I last knew of the matter."

" Ay, ay," returned Giles knowingly ; " but threescore marks, disbursed discreetly to our good and loyal burgesses, made the doors as easy to open as my wicket —that is, at timely hours, ye understand."

"Is he at large?" inquired the other.

"They say he bides at Haigh," answered Boniface, "roistering it with that Welsh knight there, Sir Osmund Neville. I warrant Sir William's substance runs gaily down the old parson's throat."

Here the palmer threw the hood over his brows. Suddenly he arose: striding across the chamber with considerable speed, he twice repeated the name of Sir Osmund Neville in a subdued tone, but with a bitterness of spirit that ill accorded with the outward habit of meekness which he had assumed.

"Giles Dauber! what keeps ye so long there a-gossiping?" shouted a shrill voice from above. It was the vocal substitute of Mistress Dauber, who, resolutely determined not to budge at her husband's bidding, had, as she lay, listened, but to little purpose. Finding it was no everyday guest, she crept to the ladder-head and gave ear for a while; but soon discovering it to be an unthrifty sort of intercourse that was going on, not likely to bring either gain or good-will to the house, and fearing that Giles might fall into some snare from his ready-mouthed opinions regarding the unsettled temper and aspect of the time, she thought fit to break abruptly on the discourse ere it should lead to some dangerous or forbidden subject. He had, however, hit upon a favourite topic, in addition to which, he was now evidently loth to leave his guest ere he had learnt the nature of his errand to these parts. An "o'er-sea pilgrim," as they were generally styled, was too choice an arrival for a petty hostel—especially in those times, when newspapers and posts were not circulating daily and hourly through the land—to let slip an opportunity of inquiring about the king of Scotland, as Robert Bruce was then called, or about his majesty, the Sultan Solyman—two personages who were very frequently confounded with each other in mine host's political hemisphere, and whose realms formed the great pandemonium whence issued all that was

MAB'S CROSS, WIGAN.

dire and disastrous to plague and perplex unhappy England.

"To bed! to bed!—Thou art ready enough to rise when thou are not bidden. To bed, I say!" angrily shouted the disturbed Benedict.

"Hast *thou* a wife?" sternly inquired the pilgrim.

"A wife!—marry have I!" exclaimed Giles; "and here she comes."

Finding there was no likelihood of a speedy termination to this interview, our hostess of the Maypole conceived it to be a matter of duty that she should at least take her full share in the discussions and disclosures that might ensue. For this purpose she descended, making a deep acknowledgment to the generally supposed sanctity of the pilgrim's vocation. So much occupied, however, did he appear by other concernments that he scarcely noticed her approach, but continued to pass with hasty and irregular steps across the chamber.

"By what quality or appearance may Sir Osmund Neville be distinguished?" he abruptly inquired.

"A right goodly person, and a brave gentleman! He gave me a sousing kiss, and a pair of mittens to boot, the last choosing of knights to the parliament," said the Dame.

"Hold thy tongue, Madge!" angrily exclaimed Giles. "Good father, heed not a woman; they are caught by the lip and the fist, like my lord's trencherman. This Sir Osmund is both lean and ill-favoured. I wonder what the Lady Mabel saw above his shoe to wed with an ugly toad spawned i' the Welsh marshes. Had ye seen her first husband, Sir William Bradshaigh—rest his soul! he was killed in the wars—you would have marvelled that she drunk the scum after the broth."

"Lady Mabel and Sir Osmund are now at Haigh?" cautiously inquired the palmer.

"You have business there, belike?" sharply interrogated the indefatigable host.

"I have slight matters that require my presence at the hall. Does the knight go much abroad, or keeps he close house?"

"Why, look ye, it is some three months or so since I smelt the fat from her ladyship's kitchen. Dan Hardseg smutted my face, and rubbered a platterful of barley-dough into my poll, the last peep I had through the buttery. I'll bide about my own hearth-flag whilst that limb o' the old spit is chief servitor. I do bethink me, though, it is long sin' Sir Osmund was seen i' the borough. Belike he may have come at the knowledge of my misadventure, and careth not to meet the wrath of a patient man."

Here the malicious dame burst into a giddy laugh.

"Thee! why Sir Osmund knoweth not thy crop from thy crupper, nor careth he if thy whole carcase were crammed into the dumpling-bag. I'feck, it were a rare pastime to see Sir Osmund, the brave Welsh knight, give the gutter to Giles of the Merry Maypole."

Giles was speechless with dismay at this aggravating insult; but the dame continued:

"I think, good stranger, the knight does keep house of late. Grim told me that last week he was a-sporting once only by way of the higher park; and he appears something more soured and moody than usual. If thou crave speech with him though, to-morrow being almous-day at the hall, the poor have free admission, and thou mayest have a sight of him there; peradventure, as thou art strange in these parts, it will be needful thou hadst a guide."

"And just ready for the job thyself, I'se warrant," bitterly snarled the exasperated husband. The storm, long threatening, was about to burst forth; but the palmer, with holy and beseeching words, soothed for awhile the angry disputants, at the same time intimating that a guide was unnecessary, the situation of the house being sufficiently obvious from whatever quarter he might direct his steps.

The stranger seemed not solicitous of repose, and Giles was too sulky to inquire his wants. The dame, however, drew a bundle of clean straw from a huge heap, and threw it beside the hearth. A coarse and heavy rug, over which was thrown a sheep-skin with the wool innermost, constituted a warm but homely couch. A horn cup filled with cider and a burnt barley-cake were next exhibited, of which the palmer made a healthful, if not a sumptuous repast. Giles growled off to the loft above ; and the dame, caring little for the sequel of her husband's humours, soon found a resting-place by his side.

Morning shone brightly and cheerfully through the chinks and crevices of both door and lattice ; but the pilgrim's couch was yet unsought. His vigils had been undisturbed, save when the baying of some vagrant and ill-disciplined dogs, or the lusty carol of some valiant yeoman, reeling home after a noisy debauch, startled him from a painfully-recurring thought, to which, however, the mind involuntarily turned when the interruption had ceased.

It was late ere Giles awoke. Breathless with expectation, he hastened below, anticipating a rich budget of news from his guest ; but he had departed.

It was one of those fresh and glittering mornings which autumn alone can produce. Keen, pure, and exhilarating, the air seemed all buoyant and elastic, tinging the cheeks with ruddy health, and animating the whole frame with renewed vigour.

A slight hoar-frost yet lay on the thatched roofs. Calm and undisturbed, a gem-like brightness twinkled from every object ; whilst the vapours that covered them looked not as the shroud, but rather as a pure mantle of eider, hiding the fair bosom to which it clung.

The pilgrim entered a narrow street leading to the postern or gate, called Standish-gate. In those days it was not, as now, a wide and free thoroughfare for man and beast. At the accustomed fairs, toll is, to

this time, demanded on all cattle changing owners at the several outlets, where formerly stood four gates, to wit, Wall-gate, Hall-gate, Mill-gate, and Standish-gate. Each gate where the toll-bars now stand was once, in good sooth, a heavy barrier of stout beams, thickly studded with iron. Through the night they were generally bolted and guarded by a company of the mayor's halberdiers. An irregular wall encompassed the town, save on the eastern side, where the river Douglas seemed, in the eyes of the burghers, to constitute a sufficient defence, a low abbatis only screening its banks. The walls were covered, or rather uncovered, by a broad ditch: a bridge of rough-hewn planks, at three of the entrances before-named, allowed a free communication with the suburbs, except during seasons of hostility, which unhappily were not rare in those days of rapine and rebellion. Before the Mill-gate a wider and more substantial structure, mounted on huge wooden props, facilitated a passage over the river. This edifice could be raised in cases of siege, effectually separating the inhabitants from their enemies.

The first beams of the sun began to peep through the angles of the wooden gable fronts, projecting nearly midway across the street, streaming athwart the frosty air, and giving a beautifully variegated and picturesque appearance to the grotesque vista bounded by the Standish-gate.

The stranger paused not, mounting the hill with an alertness and agility that scarcely seemed compatible with his age and appearance. On arriving at the gate, his garb was a sufficient passport, without the necessity of a challenge. Three or four of the guards were loitering and laughing on a couple of benches built in a sort of arched recess on each side of the gateway. As the pilgrim passed they became silent, bowing reverently as he pronounced the accustomed benison.

Outside the barriers, the road lay through an open and unenclosed country. It was a matter of but slight

moment what line of direction the narrow and uneven pathways might describe, provided their termination was tolerably accurate; all traffic and intercourse being necessarily limited, was mostly carried on through the medium of saddles and horse-furniture.

The most inaccessible part of a hill was the site generally chosen; the road ascending and descending in a meandering sort of zig-zag on its side. Rarely did our timid ancestors tempt the valley, often preferring a roundabout course over a line of hills, if by so doing the perils of the lower ground could be avoided.

The pilgrim followed a narrow and beaten track: it was bordered on each side by a deep ditch, nearly overgrown with weeds and brambles. He traversed the intricate windings of the road with considerable facility; but an hour had nearly elapsed ere he gained the brow of an eminence of no very conspicuous height, though it commanded a pretty extensive view of the country adjacent. From the east, a rich flood of glory blended the whole into one broad mass of light, melting away the beauteous frost-work, as the rays of morning dissipate the unreal visions that have their existence only in darkness and repose. Southward lay the borough, distinguishable only by the broad tower of All-Saints rising from the mist, as if baseless and suspended. A bell boomed heavily through the quiet atmosphere: its long and lingering echoes came on the pilgrim's soul like the voice of other years—of hopes and anticipations that had for ever departed.

Westward might be seen a curl of blue smoke from the newly dignified priory at Upholland, recently invested with that honour through the grants and intercessions of Sir Robert de Holland, a proud knight in the train of Thomas Earl of Lancaster. It was northward that the pilgrim turned, with a look of more intense anxiety. The mansion of Haigh stood at the extremity of a broad slope, surmounted by shady woods, now fading into the warm and luxuriant tints of autumn. Dark and

cumbrous turrets, projecting from the wings, grimly caught the first gleam of the morning ; whilst a tower of considerable strength and elevation rose above what could only be surmised as the principal gateway. It was apparently designed to overlook the whole fabric, serving as a refuge to the besieged, and a stronghold in case of attack. Narrow loopholes might be traced, irregularly disposed in the heavy masonry ; and at the summit stood a small turret resembling a large chair. from which, at stated occasions, waved the richly-emblazoned escutcheon of the Norris and the Bradshaigh. The staff was just visible, but unaccompanied by its glittering adjunct. It was this circumstance principally that seemed to engage the attention of the stranger. He broke into a loud and involuntary exclamation :

" Sir William's birthday is forgotten !—That staff opened a rich blossom to the breeze ten years agone. It is the day—the very hour of Sir William's birth ! "

He smote his forehead, scarcely able to contain the violence of his emotion.

" Let that day darken !—let it be cursed with storms and tempest ! let the shadows of death brood over it, and the teeming night bring tenfold horrors !—Yet how calm, how peacefully yonder sun approaches in his strength ! Nature is the same—bright, joyous, and unchanging !—Man, man alone, is mutable—his days are full of mourning and bitterness ! "

He bowed his head, crouching almost to the dust, in that overwhelming agony.

Suddenly he was aroused, and in a manner as unceremonious as unexpected. A smart blow on the back announced a somewhat uncourteous intruder, whilst a loud and discordant laugh struck shrilly on his ear. Starting, he beheld a figure of a low and unshapely stature, clothed in a light dress, fantastically wrought. A round cap, slouched in front, fitted closely to his head, from which depended what the wearer no doubt

looked upon as a goodly aggregate of ornaments. These consisted of ear-tassels and rings of various dimensions, that jingled oddly as he twisted his head from side to side with a knowing and important grin. A pair of large leathern boots, slipped on for travelling purposes, with ample flaps turning down from the knee, formed the lower costume of this strange being. Round his neck he wore an iron collar; its import, whether in the shape of punishment or decoration, is at this time doubtful. A visage of more than ordinary size projected from between a pair of shoulders that nearly overlooked the lower rim of his cap. A sort of dubious leer was its predominant expression, heightened ever and anon by a broad laugh, the eldritch shout of which first announced itself to the ear of the pilgrim. Matted and shaggy, the twisted locks hung wildly about his brow, whilst a short and frizzled beard served as a scanty covering to his chin. A "Sheffield whittle" stuck in his baldric; and in a pouch was deposited the remnant of a magnificent pasty. From oft and over replenishment this receptacle gaped in a most unseemly manner, showing the shattered remains, the crumbling fragments, of many a huge mountain of crust.

With arms akimbo stood this prepossessing personage before the pilgrim, in all his native rudeness and disorder. The latter tightened his cloak about him, and withdrew some three or four paces from his companion.

"Nuncle," said the jester—for such was in fact his vocation—"I wonder for what property master keeps a fool?—I bethink me 'tis for his wit: more wit and less honesty, though." The palmer was silent.

"Art going to the hall?" continued he. "The fool is whipt there for being honest. Have a care, nuncle; if Sir Osmund catch thee thou hadst as good bequeath thy bones to the Pope to make into saint's gear.—I'm very sad, nuncle!"

"Sad!" said the pilgrim; "in good troth, an' thou be sad, the cock of the hall yonder is but in sorry plight."

"'Tis more wholesome to cry to-day," said the dolorous knave, "knowing ye shall laugh to-morrow, than to laugh to-day, and to-morrow's dool somehow making your mirth asthmatic:

"Be merry to-morrow; to-day, to-day,
Your belly-full fill of grief;
When sorrow hath supp'd, go play, go play,
For mirth I wot is brief.

"Ay, grandam, ye are wise; and an old woman's wit best becomes a fool:

"When sorrow hath supp'd, go play, go play,
For mirth I wot is brief."

He drew out the last notes into one of those querulous cadences, much in vogue as an *ad libitum* on all fitting occasions: even the sad features of the pilgrim were provoked into a smile.

"Art bound for the hall?" again inquired the inquisitive hunchback.

"Yes, friend—whither else? Is it not almous-day, and thinkest thou the houseless and wandering pilgrim will not share of the largess?"

"Beggars and friars thrive—treason and corruption wed, and these be their children belike. Hast brought the Lady Mabel her old husband's bones from heathenrie?—her new one is like to leave her naught else poor soul, for her comfort. She'll make her up a saint out o' them."

"If she has gotten another husband," said the pilgrim, "the old one's bones would have a rare chance of her worship."

The facetious impertinent here gave a sort of incredulous whistle. He eyed the palmer with a keen and scrutinizing glance, but suddenly relapsing into his accustomed manner, he burst into a wild and portentous laugh.

"I tell thee, if Sir Osmund catch thee carrying so much as a thumb-nail of Sir William's carcase, he'll wring thy neck as wry as the chapel weathercock. My lady goes nigh crazed with his ill humours. I warrant thee, Sir William's ghost gaily snuffs up the sport. I have watched him up and down the old stairs, and once i' the chapel; and he told me"—whispering close to the pilgrim's ear—"a great secret, nuncle!"

"Ay—what was that, Motley?"

"Why, said he, if so be Sir William comes home again, he'll find his wife has got a cuckoo in her nest." Here he burst from the stranger with a malicious shout, and descending a by-path, was soon lost amidst the intricacies of a deep wood, skirting the verge of an extensive forest.

The traveller's brow gathered a heavier gloom. With unconscious haste he soon gained a gentle ascent, which led by a narrow and deep path to the mansion. Nigh to the bridge over the moat stood a blacksmith's hovel, conveniently situated for all job-work emanating from the armoury and the kitchen, which at that time afforded full exercise for the musical propensities of Darby Grimshaw's great anvil. This hut was a general resort to all the idlers in the vicinity; Grim, as he was generally styled for the sake of abbreviation, discharging the office of "presses," or chief moderator, in all debates held therein. He was a shrewd fellow and a bold one. A humorous and inquisitive cunning lurked in the corner of his grey and restless eye. His curiosity was insatiable; and as a cross-questioner, when fairly at work, for worming out a secret he had not his fellow. His brain was a general deposit for odd scraps, and a reservoir in which flowed all stray news about the country. He was an abstract and chronicle of the time; and could tell you where the Earl of Lancaster mustered his forces, the day of their march, and the very purposes and projects of that turbulent noble. Even the secrets of my lady's bower did not

elude the prying of this indefatigable artist; at any rate, he had the credit of knowing all that he assumed, which amounted very much to the same thing as though his knowledge were unlimited; a nod and a wink supplying the place of intelligence, when his wondering neophytes grew disagreeably minute in their inquiries.

Towards this abode did the pilgrim bend his steps. A thick smoke hovered about the thatch, that appeared very ingeniously adapted for the reception and nurture of any stray spark that might happen to find there a temporary lodgment. Several times had this Vulcan been burnt out, yet the materials were easily replaced; and again and again the hovel arose in all its pristine ugliness and disorder.

Darby was just kindling his fire: a merry-making overnight had trenched upon morning duties, and daylight found him still stretched on his pallet. Subsequent to this a noisy troop from the hall had aroused him from a profound slumber.

"St. George and the Virgin protect thee, honest friend!" said the pilgrim, as he stood by an opening, just then performing the functions of both door and chimney. Darby's perceptions being much impeded by the smoke, he hastily approached the door. His surprise manifested itself aloud, yet did he not forget a becoming reverence to the stranger, as he invited him into the only apartment, besides his workshop, of which the roof could boast. It served for parlour, bedchamber, and kitchen; where the presiding deity, Grim's helpmate, carried on her multifarious operations.

The officious housewife fetched a joint-stool, first clearing it from dust, whilst her husband added a billet to the heap. She was just preparing breakfast. A wooden porringer, filled to the brim with new milk, in which oatmeal was stirred, a rasher of salted mutton, and a large cake of coarse bread, comprised the delicacies of their morning repast. To this, however, was added a snatch of cold venison from the hall. "But this,

you see," said the old woman, "is not of our own killing; St. Gregory forbid!—it comes from Dan there, who has the care of the knight's buttery."

"Rot him for a churl!" said the smith; "Sir Osmund grudges every mouth about him; but"—and here he looked wondrous knowing—"he may happen to be ousted yet, if Earl Thomas should come by the worst in this cabal."

"Sir Osmund, I find, is no favourite with his neighbours."

"Hang him!" replied Grim, first looking cautiously into the shop; "there's not a man of us but would like to see him and his countrymen packed off to-morrow upon ass-panniers. They were spawned from the Welsh ditches to help that overgrown Earl against his master. If Sir William had been alive I had spoken out without fear. He was a loyal knight and a true—he ever served his country and his king. But I bethink me that peradventure ye may have heard of our late master's death, and who knows but ye bring some token, pilgrim, to his lady?"

"Thou hast shrewdly guessed—I bear the last message that Sir William sent to his lady; thinkest thou it may be delivered without the knight's privity?"

"Save thee, Father! peril betides him who would hazard a message to my lady without her husband's leave."

"Is the Lady Mabel in health?—and the children?" inquired the stranger.

"Sorely did she grieve when tidings came of Sir William's death in the great battle; but sorer still rues she her wedding with Sir Osmund Neville. Poor soul! It would melt the nails out of a rusty horse-shoe to see how she moans herself, when she can steal privily to her chamber. They say the knight caught her weeping once over some token that belonged to Sir William, and he burnt it before her face, ill-treating her into the bargain."

"How came she to wed this churl?"

"Oh, it's a sorry history!"—The speaker paused, and it was at the pilgrim's entreaty that he thus continued:

"Parson Cliderhow had his paw in the mischief. She was in a manner forced either to wed, or, in the end, to have found herself and her children with never a roof-tree above their heads."

"How?—Sir William did not leave her portionless?"

"I know not; but Sir Osmund had, or pretended he had, got a grant from the Earl of Lancaster for possession of all that belonged to Sir William, as a reward for his great services; and unless she wed him—why, you may guess what follows, when a lone woman is left in a wooer's clutches. I shall never forget their wedding-day; it should rather have been her burying, by the look on't. Her long veil was more like a winding-sheet than a bride's wimple."

During this recital the palmer drew his seat closer to the hearth. He leant him over his staff, absorbed in that conscious stupor which seems at once shut out from all connection with external objects, and yet intensely alive to their impressions. Suddenly he rose, tightened his sandals, and looking round, appeared as if about to depart.

"It is our late master's birthday," said the loquacious informant: "ten years ago there was free commons at the hall for man and beast. Now, save on almous-days, when some half-dozen doitering old bodies get a snatch at the broken meat, not a man of us thrusts his nose into the knight's buttery, but by stealth. Sir William's banner has not been hoisted, as it was wont on this day, since he left, with fifty armed men in his train, to help the king, then hard pressed in the Scottish wars. Ye may get an alms among the poor to-day, but have an eye to the Welsh bowmen: these be the knight's privy guard, and hold not the quality of his guests in much respect."

Here the smith's angry garrulity was interrupted by Daniel Hardseg, a sort of deputy house-steward, whose duty it was to look after all business not immediately connecting itself with any other department in the household. He was prime executive in most of the out-door duty, and a particular crony at the hovel. His "Hilloa!" was terrific.

"Why, a murrain to thee, goodman Grim, thy fire is colder than my halidome; the sun is so high it puts it out, I reckon. Here have I two iron pots, a plate from my master's best greaves, and a pair of spurs that want piercing, and I'm like to tinker them as I list on a cold stithy. Get out, thou——" Here he became aware of an additional inmate to Grim's dwelling; and this discovery for a while checked the copious torrent of Dan's eloquence. Shortly, Darby drew him aside, and from their looks it might be gathered that some scheme was negotiating for the pilgrim's safe admission at the hall. To an entreaty, more strenuously urged on the part of our diplomatist, Dan replied, in a louder tone:

"Why, look thee, gossip, it were as much as my lugs were worth—but—I'll e'en try."

"We shall hear some news about Sir William, depend on't, an' thou get him a word with my lady."

"And what the better shall I be of that?—dead men make no porridge hot," simply retorted Dan.

"Go to," replied the other; "it's but setting Maude on the scent—I warrant thee, she'll sharpen her wits for the work. It will be a grievous pity should he depart, and whisper not his message to her ladyship. Maude's thin ears, as thou knowest, can catch a whisper, and thou wilt soon squeeze the secret out of her; then comes Darby's turn—by to-morrow at the latest."

The news-doting artisan rubbed his dark fists with ecstacy. "Go, knave," said he; "thou art a teasing little varlet."

Here Grim seemed ready to hug his comrade in the

extremity of his delight; but Dan was rather sullen, evidently ruminating on peril and mischance, wherein the tempter had no share, though participating in the profits of the adventure. Eventually, the stranger was placed under the patronage of Daniel Hardseg, who, to do him justice, was well affected towards the enterprise he had undertaken.

Passing by a low wall to the north-east of the mansion, they were soon hidden by a projecting terrace or platform, which, in cases of siege, could be converted into a sort of breastwork to cover the sallies of the besieged. At the salient angle of this curtain stood a small postern, to which Dan applied a heavy key, and beckoning to his companion, they ascended a narrow staircase. A succession of dark passages led to the great hall, from which a small arched doorway communicated by a private entrance to the chapel. As they passed the half-closed door, a gruff voice was heard reciting the appointed service for the day. Dan stepped cautiously by, and motioned the stranger to tread softly. The latter paused, listening with a look of anxiety, and pressed his staff across his bosom;—soon, drawing his hood closer over his brow, he quickly followed the retreating footsteps of his companion.

"Praised be old Cliderhow's tough pipe!" said Dan, when fairly out of hearing. "Ha, ha!—sit down, sit down, good father," opening a half-door, as he laughed, and thrusting in the pilgrim; "nobody can hear aught besides, when he's fairly a-going."

The apartment into which this unceremonious conductor ushered his guest was Dan's store-room.

A most whimsical assemblage of materials were here huddled together. Pans, wooden bowls, and matters of meaner import, entered into close familiarity with broadswords and helmets; boots of home manufacture in their primitive clothing; saddles with their housings; knives, and brown bottles of coarse pottery, were intermingled with many a grim-looking weapon of blood-

thirsty aspect. From the walls depended a heterogeneous mass of apparel—cloaks, hats, and body-gear of unimaginable shape and appearance. Dan was steward of the wardrobe, or furniture-keeper to most of the retainers and other idle appendages to the hall; and as, in those days, the sciences dependent on order and classification had not spread their beneficial influence through society at large, it frequently happened that more time was consumed in rummaging amidst this unexplored chaos than would have sufficed to transact the whole affair for which any article was required. A round stool in the middle of this "*Thesaurus*"—the only unoccupied place except the ceiling—was the throne of our friend, Dan Hardseg, when dispensing out his treasures with stately munificence. On this scanty perch was the stranger duly installed, and favoured with a benignant and knowing wink from Dan as he departed.

Waiting for the return of his patron, the pilgrim was roused from a fit of reverie by the well-remembered greeting of the jester, Humphrey Lathom, or "Daft Humpy," as he was mostly called.

"Eh, nuncle! But if Dan catch thee, he'll be sure to give thee a lift i' the stocks."

This strange creature cautiously opened the door, and was speedily engulfed in all that fearful accumulation of sloth and disorder. By his manner, it did not seem to be his first irruption into this vast magazine; whilst, from the cautious and fearful glances he from time to time cast through the door, it would appear that he had been detected in his expeditions, and in all probability punished for the offence. He was evidently in search of some object from amidst the various heaps of lumber he overthrew; an inarticulate mutter, accompanying every fresh attack, indicated impatience and disappointment. Suddenly he exclaimed, drawing forth a large roll, with ludicrous expressions of delight:

"I have thee now! The buck's horns shall soon butt this great Welsh goat from his pen."

He opened the banner. It was the pennon of the Bradshaigh thrown aside to rot in dust and decay.

"Don't tell Dan, nuncle, and thou shalt see rare sport."

He said this with his usual familiarity of tone; but suddenly putting his mouth to the stranger's ear, he whispered. The words were inaudible, save to him for whom they were meant; and in an instant he darted from the spot, concealing the spoil amidst the folds of his apparel. Shortly afterwards Dan made his appearance. With wonder and dismay did he behold the ravages committed in his treasure-house—"confusion worse confounded."

"Beshrew me, but thou art a restless tenant. I did not tell thee to tumble my wardrobe into haycocks."

"I was long a-watching," said the pilgrim; "and, in good troth, I became over curious to know the capacity of thy sty. What tidings from my lady's chamber?"

"A plague on her husband's humours! Maude says it were as much as a Jew's thumb were worth to get thee privily to an audience, but she hath urged my lady to distribute the alms herself to-day; so betake thee to the kitchen; Maude will contrive thou shalt have some token of approach. St. Anthony! but thou hast bestirred thee bravely; such another guest, and I might as well set fire to the whole budget. If thou be'st bent on such another rummage in the kitchen, the cook will whack thy pate with the spit, holy and hooded though it be."

Dan led the way to this arena of gigantic gastronomy. It was a vast and smoky den, such as could only exist in those days of feudal magnificence. An immense furnace was fed by huge blocks of wood, which the ravening flame seized and in a moment enveloped in its embrace. Forms, grisly and indistinct, flitted past

this devouring blaze, by the sputtering and crackling of which, mingled with the hissing delicacies before it, and the shrill scream of the presiding fury, a stranger might be warned of his approach to this pandemonium sometime ere its wonders were visible. The pilgrim seated himself in an accessible corner, anxiously awaiting the promised signal.

On a long stone bench lay heaps of broken meat, ready for distribution to the groups of mendicants who were now clamouring without the gate. From the low and ponderous rafters hung dried mutton, bacon, and deer's tongues, wreathed in curls of smoke, that might seem to render an introduction to the chimney unnecessary for completing their flavour.

It was not long ere a pert waiting-maid approached. She drew up her short linsey-woolsey garments from the contaminations beneath her feet. Raising her chin, she thus addressed the servitors :

" My lady bids ye bring the dole quickly into the great hall—she attends to-day in person. When the bell rings," looking towards the pilgrim as she spoke, " my lady leaves her chamber."

Maude departed with the same supercilious deportment. The bell was immediately heard, and the stranger, making the best of his way into the hall, found the doors wide open, and an indiscriminate assemblage of supplicants, displaying to the best advantage a variety of modes and manifestations of distress, unhappily not confined to those unhallowed days of wretchedness and misrule. Their chief attention seemed to be directed towards a side wicket, in the upper part of which was a slide for the more convenient distribution of the accustomed largess, when the Lady Mabel did not superintend the apportioning of her beneficence.

It was soon whispered amongst the crowd that she, who had for a considerable time kept aloof from all intercourse, would that day distribute her own bounty.

The tinkling of the bell ceased, and suddenly the door

flew open. Lady Mabel and her maidens entered. The crowd fell back as she approached. Of a commanding form and deportment, she seemed a being of some superior creation ; whilst with slow and majestic steps, she passed on to the upper division of the hall where the daïs raised her slightly above the multitude.

She was habited in deep mourning : her heavy train swept gracefully over the dark pavement ; her veil, in cumbrous folds, reached almost to her feet, effectually concealing her face from the eyes of the spectators. A number of servitors now entered, bearing the allotted viands, together with sundry articles of winter apparel. The upper table was filled, and a profound silence showed the awe and respect which her presence inspired. She raised her veil. Grief, long subdued, yet deep and irremediable, hung heavily on her pallid features, but their form and character were untouched by the destroyer. Not a ringlet was visible. Her brow, bare and unornamented, threw an air of severe grandeur on her whole countenance. Around the lip fell a deeper shade of sorrow ; but sweet, inexpressibly sweet and touching, was the expression. Though the rose had faded, yet, lovelier in decay, it seemed to mingle more gracefully with the soft hues by which it was surrounded.

She waved her hand : singly the mendicants approached, proffering their simple tale of suffering and privation. To every one she administered comfort ; consoling the wretched and reproving the careless ; but each had a share of her bounty ere he withdrew.

The hall was nearly cleared ; yet the palmer sat, as if still awaiting audience, behind a distant pillar, and deeply pondering, as it might seem, the transactions he had witnessed. The last of their suppliants had departed ere he rose, bending lowly as he approached. The eye of the noble dame suddenly became riveted on him. She was leaning in front of her maidens, beside a richly-carved canopy of state, underneath which on days of feudal hospitality and pomp, presided the

master of the banquet. Behind, a long and richly variegated window poured down a chequered halo of glory around her form. She seemed an angel of light issuing from that fountain of splendour, and irradiating the whole group with her presence.

"Reverend pilgrim, thy behest?" She said this with a shudder of apprehension, as if dreading an answer to her inquiry. The pilgrim spoke not, but advanced.

The attendants drew aside. A silence, chill and unbroken as the grave, pervaded the assembly. He took from his vest a silver ring. The Lady Mabel grasped the well-known signet. With agony the most heartrending and intense she exclaimed:

"My husband's signet!—Where!—Whence came this pledge?—Speak!"

A pause ensued. It was one of those short ages of almost insupportable suspense, when the mind, wound up to the keenest susceptibility of endurance, seems vibrating on the verge of annihilation—as if the next pulse would snap its connection with the world for ever.

"Lady," the pilgrim answered, in a low sepulchral tone, "it is a bequest from thy husband. It was his wife's last pledge—a seal of unchanging fidelity. He bade me seek his dame, and say, 'His last sigh was to her—his last wish to heaven.'"

Lady Mabel listened—every tone sunk like a barbed arrow to her heart. The voice resembled not that of her deceased husband, yet such was the deceptive influence arising from the painful irritation which her spirits had undergone, that, if reason had not forbidden, her fancy would have invested it with supernatural attributes—listening to it as though it were a voice from the tomb.

"For the love I bore and yet bear to his most honoured name, tell me—I conjure thee, tell me—his earthly resting-place. My last pilgrimage shall be thither. I will enshrine his hallowed relics, and they shall be a pledge of our union where we shall no more part."

The last words were spoken with a solemnity of

expression awful and thrilling beyond the power of language to convey.

"What recks it, lady? thou hast gotten thee another," said the pilgrim.

"Another!—Oh, name him not. Never, never!—most base, most cruel. He took advantage of my bereavement—a moment of weakness and maternal terror. By what long ages of suffering and wretchedness has it been repaid! Better I had beheld my babes wasting with hunger, than have mated with this unpitying husband for a home and a morsel of bread!"

A flush of proud scorn at her own weakness overspread her features. It was but momentary. She bade the attendants withdraw. Looking round for this purpose, she was aware, for the first time, of the hated presence of Roger de Cliderhow, watching, with considerable surprise, for the result of this unexpected interview. He departed with the retinue, leaving Lady Mabel and the pilgrim for a while unobserved.

"Thou art a holy and a heaven-destined man, yet surely thou hast been taught to share another's sorrows—to pour the oil of compassion over the wounds of the penitent and broken-hearted." The lady turned aside her head—she leaned over the chair for support, whilst one hand pressed her throbbing temples.

"*Mabel Bradshaigh!*" It was the voice of Sir William. She started as at a summons from the tomb. No other form was visible but that of the pilgrim bending over his staff. Her eye wandered wildly around the hall, as if she expected some phantom to start from its recesses. A richly-fretted screen, behind which the minstrels and lookers-on occasionally sat at the festival, stood at the lower end of the apartment. A slight rustling was heard; she was about to rush towards the spot, when the voice was again audible, and apparently at her side. Slowly the hood of the pilgrim was uplifted. He threw off his disguise; but oh, how changed was the once athletic form of Sir William Bradshaigh! With

a wild and piercing shriek she flew towards the outstretched arms of her husband; but ere they met, a figure stepped between, barring their approach. It was the ungainly person of Sir Osmund Neville.

"Nay, nay, seek thy leman elsewhere, thou gay palmer. It were a brave honour, truly, to graft me with thy favours." With this brutish speech he was proceeding to lay hands on the lady, who stood stupefied in amaze, and bereft of power to offer the least resistance.

"To me this insult! I'll chase thee from thy lair!" exclaimed the incensed Sir William.

Roger de Cliderhow at this moment suddenly approached, and in great alarm. He whispered Sir Osmund.

"'Tis Sir William!—Thou hast no time for parley. If his coming get abroad we are undone. Call thy men hither, and let him be conveyed away privily. The dungeon will tell no tales. I'll summon them. If the servants get a whisper of the matter, I'll give out he is an impostor."

Fearful of encountering the glance of his injured lord, this worthy withdrew in great precipitation.

It was but the work of a moment. Sir Osmund had taken the precaution to prevent all egress, so that Sir William and his lady were, in fact, prisoners, at the mercy and discretion of a cruel and cowardly foe.

Sir William had thrown off his cloak and the remainder of his disguise. He now stood proudly erect before the supplanter, who was somewhat stunned by this unexpected issue.

"I defy thee to the combat; hast thou the grace to give me a weapon, or art thou as cowardly as thou art presuming?" tauntingly inquired Sir William.

"Impostor! wouldst have me believe every wish that folly genders? To the proof!" sullenly replied Sir Osmund.

"What says the Lady Mabel? Let her decide," returned the other.

"She!" cried the ingrate, with a contemptuous sneer; "her wits are so set upon it, that she would worship any ill-favoured lout that should call himself her husband."

"'Tis false! unblushing as thou art." The lightning kindled in the lady's eye as she spoke. Sir Osmund quailed beneath her glance.

"Am I mad?" she continued; "aye, if thy wish could have goaded me to it. Thou hast heaped on me tortures, indignities, cruel as thy relentless nature could devise; but I have been spared for this!" Her lips quivered. Shuddering, she spoke with amazing energy and distinctness. "I *have* repented, day and night, but they were unavailing tears. Oh, if I have wronged thee"—she covered her face with her hands—"it was not even in thought that I grew unfaithful to thy trust. My babes, in a moment of weakness I looked on them, smiling as they lay. I could not dash the cup from their lips ere they had well nigh tasted. I could not behold them so soon doomed to misery and want."

She made a convulsive effort to repress her sobs.

"Can years of suffering atone for my crime?"

She drew back as she continued, "I abhor, I loathe the very existence I am forced to prolong. The cloister alone can hide my wretchedness and my shame."

"I forgive thee: nay, shrink not from my embrace," cried the distracted Sir William; "I blame thee not in my regret. Pure, and as free from guilt as when first I knew thee, do I now receive thee to my arms."

Sir Osmund smiled in contempt; at the same time casting a furtive glance towards the side entrance, where, true to his word, Roger De Cliderhow had summoned a guard of Welsh bowmen, their master's accomplices in many a deed of violence and rapine.

Sir Osmund heard their approach. He cautiously undrew the bolts, and, pointing to his foe with a signal they but too well understood, the latter was immediately seized, and with such rapidity, that almost before

Sir William was aware of their design, he found himself a prisoner and incapable of resistance.

"Traitor, thou wilt rue this foul despite! I here proclaim thee a craven knight and a dastard!" exclaimed Sir William.

"False pilgrim," growled his adversary, "didst think to foist thy fooleries upon me! The dungeon walls will give thee a patient hearing. Boast to them of thy descent, and when they acknowledge thee, so will I. Guards, to your duty."

Lady Mabel, with a loud and appalling shriek, fell senseless on the pavement.

In vain did Sir William endeavour to free himself from the rude grasp of his conductors. He was hurried along, nor did there appear the remotest possibility of escape. Just as they turned into a sort of corridor, leading to the passages more immediately connected with the place of their destination, they encountered Humphrey Lathom. The same half-stupid, half-knavish expression of face was now lighted up by a grin of apparently inexplicable amazement.

"Eh, nuncle," said he, stroking his beard, "but you're in mighty grace. The Welshman always mounts his he-goats for guard on them he delighteth to honour." With one of his more than ordinarily elfish and malicious shouts he scampered past the enraged sentinels, and was heard rapidly ascending the steps of the great tower, beneath the massive foundations of which lay the dark and cheerless abode so unexpectedly destined for the reception of its owner.

Whilst these occurrences were passing within the walls Grim's curiosity was in prodigious exercise without. His anxiety increased in a compound ratio with the time elapsed, and inversely as the hope of intelligence was decreasing. Every spare moment his eye was directed towards the hall; but no tidings came, no scout, no messenger from the scene of action, from whom the slightest inkling of the result could be gathered. It

seemed as though all intercourse had ceased, all transit and communication were cut off. It was mighty strange! some rare doings were afloat, no doubt, and not a soul would remember honest Grim in his thrall. He tied and untied his apron, beat the iron when it was cool, and let it cool when it was hot. "It will be noon presently." He looked at the sun; it seemed to have crept backward for the last half-hour: at any rate, he was morally certain that useful appendage to this great and troublesome world had stood still, if not retrograded. The mendicants were all gone—no tidings to be gained from them—matters were more than usually contrary and provoking—and if it had not been for some recent disgrace which his prying disposition had occasioned at the hall, he would long ago have satisfied himself by a personal inquiry into the present posture of affairs.

"Hope deferred" was just on the point of being attended with the usual consequences, when, taking another peep through a crevice, constructed for putting into effect a more efficient system of examination, he beheld a phenomenon as unlooked for as it was incomprehensible. He rubbed his eyes, strongly persuaded that some rigorous discipline was necessary. He pinched his fingers, shook himself—was he really awake? or—he took another peep, still it was there; nor crossings, ejaculations, nor other established contrivances had any effect. The vision that caused all this disturbance was the great banner of the Bradshaigh on the tower, curling full and stately in the breeze.

Wonders and misfortunes rarely come unattended. Grim's appetite for the marvellous was now in danger of suffering as much from repletion as before from inanity, and he had just summoned his dame for a special council, when his ears were assailed by a furious ding-dong. Stroke upon stroke, huge, heavy, and unceasing, followed each other in rapid succession. It was the great bell, used only on occasions of emergency

and importance, the hoarse tongue of which had been silent since the day of Sir William's departure. There was no time to waste in conjecture. Grim rushed from his dwelling. Convinced that some catastrophe was at hand, his intention was to climb the hill behind his little hovel, in order to reconnoitre the premises with greater facility. Sallying forth, he saw numbers of the peasantry on the same errand. All was bustle and inquiry ; each giving his neighbour credit for the possession of some intelligence whereby the mystery might be unravelled.

" Sir William cannot have returned ! " said one.

" No," replied another, " or the buck would soon butt the Welshman out of his stall."

" Ha, ha ! " said a neighbouring gossip ; " those horns are big enough," pointing to the device upon the banner—a buck passant.

As they drew nearer to the great gate the bell had ceased, when suddenly appeared, perched on a corner of the tower, the well-known form of " Daft Humpy." He threw up his cap, caught it, and whirled it round his head with every demonstration of joyous extravagance. " Hurrah ! " shouted he, with a distinct and shrill enunciation, which might be heard to the very extremities of the crowd. " Hurrah for Sir William Bradshaigh !—he is come again !—hurrah, neighbours ! —in, in ! "

He ran round the battlements with unceasing vociferation. On hearing this news, numbers entered the gate pell-mell, carrying with them some who would fain have acted with more discretion, by watching the issue warily and out of harm's way. Of this class was our stout-fisted friend Darby Grim, who, though of a well-composed valour when fairly tested, was yet slow to move and cared not to thrust his fingers uselessly into a broil.

The first party that entered was met by Humphrey.

" Pick-axes and spades ! " cried he, flourishing a stout staff. " To the dungeon !—come along, come along ! "

So far from accelerating their speed, this address seemed at once to suspend all further progress. They gazed at each other ; none wist what to do, naturally not overburdened with confidence in the discretion of their guide. Suddenly checking himself, he stood as erect as the nature of his form would admit before the astonished auditors.

" Ye lazy caterpillars! ye cowardly scum of humanity! if ye follow me not, I'll rouse the Welsh bull-dogs. Sir Osmund hath ta'en him to the dungeon, I tell ye ; and who is there that will not lend a hand to the rescue of Sir William Bradshaigh ? "

Grim was among the foremost of the invading army ; on hearing this news, a latent spark enkindled his courage most opportunely into a blaze. Seizing a cudgel, he brandished it in front of his comrades, like one half-frantic, crying, " It is, it is ; I have seen him this blessed day ;—hurrah for Sir William ! "

" Hurrah ! " shouted the crowd, whose courage, augmenting with their numbers, soon manifested itself in an immediate attack on the cell, whence they speedily extricated their lord. Intoxicated with joy, they vowed a summary vengeance on the discourteous knight who had so vilely entreated him.

Sir William's first care was for the rescue of his lady. She almost forgot her own sorrows on witnessing his joy when once more folding the children to his embrace. A short interval elapsed ere he sought his adversary ; but he had fled, along with his unworthy followers. Such was the wrong Sir William had suffered, that his yet untamed spirit deemed it an offence too foul to be expiated by aught but the blood of his merciless foe. Armed, and with but few attendants, he hotly pursued him, and, as old chronicles tell, at a placed called Newton, he overtook and slew him in single combat. Returning in safety, he lived happily with his lady to a good old age. They lie buried in the chancel of All Saints, Wigan, where, carved on the tomb, their effigies still

exist, the rarest of the monumental antiquities in that ancient edifice.

The Lady Mabel's spirit had been too sorely wounded to recover its tranquillity. For the purpose of what was then deemed an expiation of her unintentional offence, she performed a weekly penance, going barefooted from Haigh to a place outside the walls at Wigan, where a stone cross was erected, which bears to this day the name of "MAB'S CROSS."

THE PRIOR OF BURSCOUGH

" Quhere are ye boun, ye bold prior,
With that ladye on your knee ? "
" I'm boun to the hills, I'm boun to the dales,
I'm boun to the grey priory."

Old Ballad. MS.

Of the once renowned priory of Burscough, only two pillars, belonging to the centre arch of the church, are now remaining. It is situated about two miles from Ormskirk, on the Preston road, in a level district of great compass renowned for its fertility. The extensive manor and living of Ormskirk formerly belonged to this priory. The charter of King Edward II., " reciting and confirming the grants of the donors," with a confirmation of the charter by which " the prior and convent of Burscough, and their successors for ever, shall have one market every week on Thursday, at their manor of Ormskirk, and likewise one fair every year, of five days' continuance," is still preserved in the office of the Duchy of Lancaster.

This religious house was founded for Black Canons by Robert Fitzhenry, Lord of Latham or Lathom, in the reign of Richard I. It was formerly the burial-place of the Earls of Derby ; but many of the coffins have been removed to their vault in the church at Ormskirk, built by Edward, the third Earl, great grandson of Thomas, first Earl of Derby, who had the honour of crowning Henry VII. at Bosworth Field with the coronet torn from the brows of the slain tyrant.

The main fact of the following tradition may be found in the Calend. Rotulo. Patents, fol. 155, art. 13, containing the free pardon granted by Edward III. to the atrocious murderer of Michael de Poininges and Thomas le Clarke, after the rape he had committed on Margaret de la Bech.

At the Dissolution, this priory had a superior, five

monks, and forty servants. The last prior was John Barton, who surrendered the living, and subscribed to the King's supremacy. He was surviving as late as the year 1553.

That curious structure, the church at Ormskirk, having two steeples, a tower and spire, contiguous to each other, is briefly glanced at in the tradition. This circumstance, according to some accounts, was occasioned by the removal of part of the bells from Burscough at the dissolution of the monasteries, when the existing spire steeple was found to be not sufficiently capacious. The tenor bell, said to have been the third bell, bears some apparent proof of its translation. Round the circle, below the ear, is the following inscription in black letter, except the initials of the founder :—

" J. S. * de Burscough * Armig. * et * e * vr. * me fecerunt in honorem Trinitatis * R. B. 1497."

About half-way down the bell is another date, 1576.

Where each asterisk is marked are the *rose*, *portcullis*, and *fleur de lis*. Beneath the inscription a neat border is cast, filled up in the centre with the *rose*, *portcullis*, and *fleur de lis*, repeated so as to occupy the whole circumference of the bell. We have been thus particular in our description as it may not be uninteresting to pursue this inquiry, connected as it is with some important historical facts, not irrelevant to the subject.

The following remarks may preclude any further observations of our own :—

" The *red rose* is well known to have been the favourite emblem of the house of Lancaster, from whom Henry VII. was descended, and through whom he gloried in claiming his title to the throne.

" His mother, Margaret Countess of Richmond, then Countess of Derby, was sole daughter and heiress of the Duke of Somerset,* who bore the *portcullis* as an heraldic

* *Beaufort*, Duke of Somerset. Somerset, Duke of Beaufort, now bears the *portcullis* for his crest. There is an engraving by Vertue, from a painting in the royal collection at Kensington Palace by Maubeugius in 1496, of the three children of Henry VII. and Elizabeth his queen, *Prince Henry*, *Prince Arthur*, and *Princess Margaret*, which is ornamented at the top with the *portcullis* surmounted with roses.

distinction. This nobleman was descended from John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, and Henry had a right to the honourable bearings of his royal ancestors. Hence the '*rose and portcullis*' were favourite badges of this monarch, as peculiarly belonging to the house of Lancaster. The '*fleur de lis*' is the emblem of France; and, independently of the arms of that kingdom being quartered at that time, and till very lately, with the royal arms of England, Henry had a right to assume this distinction also, as being the grandson of Sir Owen Tudor and Catherine of France, relict of Henry V.

"The first date, also 1497, refers to a very important period in history, as connected with the Derby family. Two short years before, the great, the brave Sir William Stanley, who, of his own power and interest, raised and brought 3,000 horse and foot to the rescue of his prince, when his life, his honour, and his hopes of a throne were at stake; who contributed to his victory, and helped to crown him 'King' in the field; had, by that very sovereign, been sent to the block, merely on account of a doubtful and unguarded expression, reported by a rebel, a traitor, and an ungenerous friend. The unhappy monarch, learning too late the dire effects of groundless suspicion, paid a visit in the following year to his deeply-wounded step-father, the brother of the dauntless hero whom he had so lately sacrificed.

"It is stated that the King arrived at Knowsley on or about the 24th June, 1496, and then went to Lathom; whence, after remaining a month with his mother the Countess, and the Earl her husband, he returned to London.

"This brings us within one year of the date on the tenor bell, and I cannot help thinking that its emblems have some allusion to the royal visit to Knowsley and Lathom. It becomes, however, necessary to attempt to account for the second date, 1576, on the same bell. And here we can again only conjecture. It is not improbable that the original bell was injured; that, prior to breaking up, its inscription and emblems were carefully moulded, and a new one cast, with the old metal, in the year 1576, care being taken that a copy of the inscription, etc., should

fill the same situation in the present bell, which the originals occupied in the former."*

It may not be deemed irrelevant to mention here a tradition which exists relative to the visit of King Henry VII. at Lathom, particularly as it does not appear to be generally known.

After the execution of Sir William Stanley, when the King visited Lathom, the Earl, when his royal guest had viewed the whole house, conducted him up to the leads for a prospect of the country. The Earl's fool, who was among the company, observing the King draw near to the edge of the leads not guarded with a balustrade, stepped up to the Earl, and pointing down to the precipice, said, "*Tom, remember Will.*" The King understood the meaning and made all haste down stairs, and out of the house; and the fool long after seemed mightily concerned that his lord had not had courage to take that opportunity of avenging himself for the death of his brother.—*Kennett's MSS.* 1033, fol. 47.

It was on a still and sultry evening, about the close of summer, in the year of grace one thousand three hundred and forty-seven, that a solitary traveller was seen hastily descending, by a woodland path, into the gloomy thickets that surrounded the neighbouring priory of Burscough. The rain-drops were just pattering on the dark leaves above him, and the birds were fast hastening to some deeper shelter. The timid rabbit, as the stranger passed by, darted into its burrow, and many a quiet face gazed on him from beneath a pair of ragged antlers, peeping over the fences that guarded the demesne. Here and there a narrow glade opened beautifully into the woods, through which might be seen green lawns and pastures, with herds of dappled deer stealing silently to their covert. The low growl of the distant thunder seemed to come upon each living thing like the voice of some invisible spirit, subduing

* Glazebrook's Southport.

with its mysterious speech every power and faculty, with an authority superior to all human control.

The traveller hastened on. The pinnacles and stately turrets of the priory were just visible through the arched boughs, when, turning into a more sequestered path, he observed a female of a wild and uncouth aspect standing in the way. She showed no disposition to move as he approached, nor did she seem to notice his presence. He stopped, but sufficiently near to distinguish the motion of her lips. An unintelligible mutter accompanied it. She looked darkly towards the south, beckoning to the coming thunder, and pointing, as though she would guide its course, towards the grey walls of the priory.

She was dressed in a dark-coloured corset fitting close to the body, and a hood of the same materials. Her hair was a deep jet, and fantastically twisted about her face. She was of low stature, but not bowed by decrepitude or age. Her cheek was hollow, and her complexion swarthy, but her eye grew unnaturally bright, blazing out with a fierceness, intense as though the fire within were visible through these chinks and crevices of the soul's tenement.

Though the storm was rapidly approaching she still kept her place, unawed by the rude elements, and seeming to suffer but little inconvenience from the shower, now descending with great vigour. The path was narrow, and a thick underwood skirted the road, so that for the stranger to pass was impossible, unless his opponent chose to take up a more favourable position. But the sudden burst of a terrific thunder-clap, which seemed to roll in a continuous peal above them, made him less ceremonious on this head than the laws of gallantry might warrant. He drew nearer to the female, with the intention of seeking a passage on that side where the least disturbance would be given.

"Go not. 'Tis accursed!" said she, as if preparing to dispute the attempt.

"I am a stranger, and hastening for shelter. In troth, 'tis a narrow goit that will not let a drowning man through. Prythee, dame, let me not, in some wise, seem uncourteous. Yet——"

Here he attempted to pass; but she seized him, and with so powerful a grasp that for a moment his intention was foiled, so sudden and unexpected was the attack. Though of a stout and muscular shape, yet was he holden tightly, as if she were exulting in her strength. Either malice or madness had given her a vigour of body beyond that of her sex.

"Michael de Poininges!"

The stranger started at this recognition.

"I warn thee! Thinkest thou yon fiend will forward thy mission. Wilt thou tear the prey from the jaws of the famished and ravening wolf? Beware!"

Some score of years had elapsed since De Poininges was a visitor in these parts; and he was now upon some sacred mission to the Prior of Burscough, Thomas de Litherland, whose great power and reckless intrepidity of guilt had won for him a name of no common note, even in those ages of privileged injustice and oppression. No bosom but his own, at least in that neighbourhood, could have been privy to the business which brought him hither; and yet he found a woman casually crossing his path, whose knowledge of his errand was but too evident, and whose appearance and deportment might well excuse the suspicions he entertained as to her familiarity with the EVIL ONE.

"Go, poor beast! Thou art but fattened for the slaughter!" She said this, apparently addressing a stout buck that was sheltering in the thicket. De Poininges shuddered, as she looked on him askance, with some dubious meaning.

"I'll meet thee at supper-time."

This was said with a slow and solemn enunciation, as though some terrible warning was intended, yet durst he not question her further; and ere he

could reply she had disappeared in the recesses of the forest.

The rain now poured down in torrents, and De Poininges was fain to hasten with all possible expedition towards the porter's gate.

The priory of Burscough had been founded the century preceding, for a brotherhood of Black Canons, by Robert Fitzhenry, Lord of Lathom. He endowed it with considerable property, emoluments, and alms, and, according to the weak superstition of the age, thought thereby to obtain pardon and rest for the souls of Henry the Second, John, Earl of Moreton, himself, his wife, and all his ancestors ; at the same time wishing the kingdom of heaven to all persons who would increase the gifts, and consigning to the devil and his angels all who should impiously infringe on his bequests.

It was dedicated to St. Nicholas, and a rude effigy of the saint was carved over the south porch of the chapel, with two or three naked children at his feet. The building was not large, but the architecture was chaste and beautiful, a noble specimen of the early Gothic, then superseding the ponderous forms and proportions of the Norman, or rather Saxon era. The arches were sharply pointed. The windows, narrow and lancet-shaped, were deeply recessed ; the slender shafts of the columns were carried in clusters to a vast height, surmounted by pinnacles of rich and elegant tracery ; these gave a light and airy character to the whole, highly significant of the buoyant feelings that accompanied so wonderful an escape from the heavy trammels of their predecessors.

Craving shelter, De Poininges was admitted without any question, as all travellers partook indiscriminately of the general bounty. The religious houses in those days were the constituted almonries of the rich and great ; and through these overflowing channels, for the most part, proceeded their liberality and beneficence.

He was ushered into one of the *locutories*, or parlours, where, his business being with the prior, he was desired to wait until an audience could be granted.

Prior Thomas, from some cause or other not assigned, held himself at that season much estranged and secluded from his brethren. He had seldom been seen from his lodgings, except when performing his accustomed office in the church. He had not taken his place in the refectory of late, the duties of the day being performed by one of the elder canons.

De Poininges, after a short space, was summoned to the prior's chamber. In his progress, he passed the door of the refectory where the brethren were at supper. It was large and wainscoted, and furnished with an ample dresser. Cupboards were let into the wall, and windows opened into the kitchen, through which their meal was served.

One of the monks was reading the appointed service from a low pulpit or desk. The prior's seat was still vacant. Their way now led through the cloisters, and at the opposite side of the quadrangle a portal communicated by a long and dark passage with the prior's lodging. This was a sort of inferior castellated mansion, with a spacious hall, and a smaller dining-chamber immediately adjoining. At the end was a fair chapel or oratory. Ascending a flight of stone steps, they came to a low door. The conductor knocked, and De Poininges soon found himself in the presence of the proud Prior of Burscough. He wore a square cap of black stuff, after the fashion of his order. His cloak, or upper garment, was of the same colour, trimmed round the bottom with a double edging. He reposed on a couch, or oaken settle, and seemed, in some measure, either indisposed or unwilling to notice the homage he received. His figure was strong and muscular, his complexion dull, and almost swarthy. His lips were full, and his aspect rather coarse than sensual. His brows were high, and unusually arched ; but his eyes were down-

cast, and seldom raised towards the speaker. In speech he was brief and interrogative, but impatient under a tardy or inefficient answer.

"Thy name, stranger?"

"Michael de Poininges."

"From whence?"

"My business concerns you in private. I await your reverence's pleasure."

The prior motioned the attendants to withdraw.

"Proceed. Thy message?" He spoke this with precipitancy, at the same time abruptly changing his position.

"Mine errand is touching one Margaret de la Bech," said De Poininges, seating himself opposite to the prior; "and I am directed to crave your help for the clearing away of some loose suspicions regarding her concealment."

"Her concealment!" replied De Litherland, starting up angrily from the couch. "Her concealment! They who hide may find. I know not aught of the wench, save that she was mad, and drowned herself. But why not inquire of Sir Thomas? The maiden was not in my keeping." He paced the chamber haughtily, but with a disturbed and lurid aspect.

"Yet," replied the other, "it is well and currently reported, and witnesses there be who have already testified as to a fact, that some of your men were seen the night of her withdrawal lurking in her path, and that screams and other manifestations of the outrage then perpetrated were heard in this direction. Not that we deem any blemish can attach to your reverence in this matter. Still——"

"Why dost thou hesitate in thy speech?" said the prior, in a voice almost inarticulate with choler.

"I would say," answered De Poininges, "that it is our wish, and your duty, to search into this dark question, without favour or prejudice; and, further, we do reckon that the Prior of Burscough is not without the

means to discover, and the power to punish, his offending vassals."

"And whose evil star guided thee hither with this insolent message?" inquired the prior, pale and trembling with rage.

"Those whom your reverence may not lightly contemn. I have here a warrant from the Council to procure all fitting help and suppliance for the bringing up the body of Margaret de la Bech, who is suspected of being detained in this neighbourhood, by persons hitherto unknown, against her own proper will and consent."

The prior paused for a space. A somewhat more placid expression and demeanour was the result.

"I am no stranger," said he, "to this idle and mischievous rumour. Means have been used to discover its likelihood or credibility, but we find it to be utterly false and unworthy of our notice. The inventor of these tales shall not long escape."

"Yet hath she been a-missing ever since," said De Poininges warily; "and in vain hath search been made for the body. And furthermore, we have her own expressed apprehension, as it regards one she durst not name, and a perilous foreboding of the evil that awaited her. It is to this source, yet obscure, I must own, that our inquiries are to be directed."

"Tarry here until the morning, and I will then give thee some further discourse on the matter."

"Nay, Sir Prior," answered De Poininges. "I thank your grace's courtesy, but this night I must away to the village or town hereabout, Ormschurch I think it be, and there, in all likelihood, I may abide for some days."

The prior bit his lips, but sought not to oppose his intent, further than by giving a hint that foul weather was abroad, and of the good cheer and dry lodging the priory afforded. De Poininges, however, took his way afoot, returning to the town, where his horse and two

trusty attendants awaited him at the tavern or hostel.

The evening was fair, and the sky clear, save a broad and mountainous ridge of clouds piled up towards the north-east, from whence hung a black and heavy curtain stretching behind the hills in that direction. The sparkling of the sea was visible at intervals behind the low sand-hills, skirting the coast, giving out, in irregular flashes, the rich and glowing radiance it received. A lucid brightness yet lingered over the waves, which De Poininges stood for a moment to observe, as he gained the brow of the hill near the church. To this edifice was then appended a low spire, not exhibiting, as now, the strange anomaly of a huge tower by its side, seated there apparently for no other purpose than to excite wonder, and to afford the clerk an opportunity of illustrating its origin by the following tradition:

Long time ago, two maiden sisters of the name of Orme, the founders of this church, disagreed as to the shape of this most important appendage. Tower against spire was, in the end, likely to leave the parties without a church in answer to their prayers, had not the happy suggestion offered itself in the shape of a pair of these campanile structures suited to the taste of each.

That the foregoing is an idle and impertinent invention there is little need to show, inasmuch as both tower and spire might still have been built to satisfy the whim of the old ladies, though placed in the usual manner, one serving as a substratum to the other. A more probable solution is the following, though it may be as far from the truth:—At the dissolution of the priory of Burscough in the time of our great reformer, Henry the Eighth—who, like many modern pretenders to this name, was more careful to reform the inaccuracies of others than his own—the bells were removed to Ormskirk; but the small tower beneath the spire not being sufficiently capacious, the present square

steeple was added, and the wonder perpetuated to this day.

De Poininges, on crossing the churchyard, met there a personage of no less note than Thomas the Clerk, or Thomas le Clerke, retiring from some official duties, arrayed in his white surplice and little quaint skull-cap. He was a merry wight, and in great favour with the parish wives. He could bleed and shave the sconce; draw out bonds and quittances; thus uniting three of the professions in his own proper person. He was prime mover in the May games, and the feast of fools. Morris, Moriscoe, or Moorish dancers, there is good reason for supposing, were not then introduced, though by some said to have been brought into England in the sixth year of Edward III, when John of Gaunt returned from Spain; but few traces of it are found earlier than Henry VII, so that it is more probable we had them from our Gallic neighbours, or even from the Flemings.

He could dance, too, and play on the rebeck and citerne, this being a common amusement with the customers during the time they were in waiting at the barbers' shops, as newspapers were not then at hand to sustain this difficult office. He was of a dainty person; clad mostly in a kirtle of light watchet-colour, thick-set with loose points. His hosen were grey, mingled with black, and his shoes were belayed with knots and ornaments, of which, and his other stray gear, he was not a little proud.

This Thomas was used to go about with a censer, on a Sunday, as Chaucer hath it,—

"Censing the wives of the parish feast."

Absalom, that pink of clerkly portraiture, seemed but a fair prototype of this individual, Geoffrey Chaucer at this time being a setter forth of rhymes and other matters for the ticklish ears of sundry well-fed and frolicsome idlers about the court of King Edward.

The merry knave of whom we speak was, however,

in happy ignorance of all courtly fashions. Provided he obtained his Sunday contributions, and his Christmas loaf, and his eggs at Easter, little wot he how the world went round. He was a frequent visitor at the tavern, and De Poininges had already been distinguished by his especial notice.

From his character, and the means of information arising out of his multifarious occupations, De Poininges expected that some of the intelligence he was in search of might be gathered from this source.

The petty hostelry was now in sight, a projecting bush denoting the vintner's residence. The house was but thinly attended, though clean rushes and a blazing billet bespoke comfort and good cheer. De Poininges and his companion turned aside into a smaller chamber, where mine host was speedily summoned for a flagon of stout liquor. This being supplied, they addressed themselves to the wooden utensil with right goodwill; and as the draughts began to quicken, so did the clerk's tongue not fail to wag the faster. De Poininges adroitly shifted the discourse upon the business of which he was in quest, whenever there was a tendency to diverge, no rare occurrence, Thomas being somewhat loth for a while to converse on the subject. The liquor, however, and his own garrulous propensities, soon slipped open the budget, and scraps of intelligence tumbled out which De Poininges did not fail to lay hold of as hints for another line of examination.

"I reckon so, at any rate, and so said Geoffrey," replied the clerk, after a pause, subsequent to some close question.

"Sir Thomas, the Lord of Lathom, as you may have heard, he is a good-hearted soul, and this Margaret de la Bech was companion to his daughter Isabel. She was ever held as a dame of good family and descent, though a stranger in these parts. Then she was passing fair, so that both squire and gentleman, as they looked on her, were nigh devoured with love. They say, too,

BURSCOUGH ABBEY.

her conditions were gentle and winsome as a child; and——"

"Good," said De Poininges, who found he was slipping away from the main subject. "But hath not Sir Thomas made some apparent search since her disappearance from the hall?"

"Save the mark—she was drowned in the moat. So say the gossips," said the clerk, looking askance. "Her hood and mantle were on the brink—but her body! why, it never jumped out again to look for them—that's all."

"But did no one look for the body?" carelessly inquired De Poininges.

"The knight groped diligently in the castle ditch for many days; but light fishes make light nets, as we say. There was no corpse to be found, and many an Ave Maria has been said for her soul."

"What cause was then assigned for this fearful deed?"

"'Tis said she was in love, and went mad! I wot she was sighing and rambling about the house, and would seldom venture out alone, looking as though she were in jeopardy, and dreaded some hidden danger."

"Thinkest thou, friend, that some hidden danger might not be the cause; and this show of her drowning but a feint or device that should turn aside the current of their inquiry?"

The clerk looked anxious and uneasy, sore puzzled, as it might seem, to shape out an answer. At length, finding that the question could not be evaded, he proceeded with much hesitation as follows:

"Safe as my Lord Cardinal at his prayers—she is dead though; for I heard her wraith wailing and shrieking up the woods that night as I stood in the priory close. It seemed like, as it were, making its way through the air from Lathom, for the smell of consecration, I reckon."

"Go on," said De Poininges, whose wits were shrewdly beginning to gather intelligence from these furtive attempts at concealment.

"Well-a-day," continued the clerk, draining an ample potation, "I've heard strange noises thereabout; and the big building there, men say, is haunted by the ghost."

"Where is the building thou speakest of?"

"The large granary beyond the postern leading from the prior's house towards the mill. I have not passed thereby since St. Mark's vigil, and then it came." Here he looked round, stealing a whisper across the bench—"I heard it: there was a moaning and a singing by turns; but the wind was loud, so that I could scarcely hear, though when I spake of it to old Geoffrey the gardener, he said the prior had laid a ghost, and it was kept there upon prayer and penance for a long season. Now, stranger, thou mayest guess it was no fault of mine if from this hour I passed the granary after sunset. The ghost and I have ever kept ourselves pretty far apart."

"Canst show me this same ghostly dungeon?"

"Aye, can I, in broad daylight; but——"

"Peradventure thou canst show me the path, or the clue to it; and I warrant me the right scent will lie at the end on't."

"And pray, good master, wherefore may your curious nose be so mightily set upon this same adventure?" said the clerk, his little red and ferrety eyes peering very provokingly into those of his opposite neighbour. Now, De Poininges was not for the moment prepared to satisfy this unexpected inquiry, but his presence of mind did not forsake him. Rightly guessing his friend's character—a compound in universal esteem, to wit, fool and knave—he drew from his pouch a couple of bright ship nobles, then but newly coined, which effectually diverted the prying looks of Thomas le Clerke.

"Why, look ye," said the latter, as the coin jingled in his bag, "I was ever held in good repute as a guide, and can make my way blindfolded over the bogs and

mosses hereabout ; and I would pilot thee to the place yonder, if my fealty to the prior—that is—if—I mean—though I was never a groat the richer for his bounty ; yet he may not like strangers to pry into his garners and storehouses, especially in these evil times, when every cur begins to yelp at the heels of our bountiful mother ; and every beast to bray out its reproaches at her great wealth and possessions."

De Poininges was more and more convinced that his neighbour knew more of the matter than he durst tell ; but it seemed expedient to conceal his suspicions for the present. In the end it was agreed that the cunning clerk should accompany him so far as to point out the situation ; but on no account would he consent to keep watch during the absence of De Poininges. The latter assented to this arrangement, secretly resolving to dictate other terms where his will should both command and be obeyed.

They immediately set out on horseback, followed by the servants, to whom De Poininges had given a private signal.

The moon had risen. One bright star hung like a "jewel in an Ethiop's ear" in the dark sky above the sun's track, which at this season sweeps like a lucid zone, dividing day from night, round the northern horizon. Such a time of purity and brightness often succeeds the sultry and oppressive languor of the day, especially when refreshed by the passing storm ; the air so clear that objects press, as it were, upon the eyeballs, affecting the sight as though they were almost palpable to the touch. The dews had not descended, but the leaves were still wet. Big drops glittered on the moonlight, pouring a copious shower on the travellers as they passed. The clerk began a low chant, humming and whistling by turns : this gradually grew more audible, until the full burst of the "*Miserere*" commenced richly adorned with his own original quavers. So enamoured was he of his qualifications in this respect

that he was fairly getting through High Mass, when, midway in a ravishing "*Benedictus*," he made a sudden halt.

"What is that creeping behind the bushes there?" inquired he, in a sort of half-whisper to his companion. De Poininges looked in the direction pointed out, and thought he saw something, dark and mysterious, moving between the boughs on his left. He stopped, but the object, whatever its nature, had disappeared.

So alarmed was the timid chorister; but though his melodies had ceased, a plentiful supply of credos and paternosters were at hand to supply their place. Crossing himself with a great show of sanctity, he moved on with much caution, his deep hoarse voice having subsided into a husky and abrupt whisper, often interrupted when objects the most trivial arrested his glance and aroused his suspicions.

They arrived without molestation at an enclosure about a mile distant from the priory. Here they alighted, leaving the horses to the care of their attendants. Turning the angle made by a low wall, they observed a footpath, which the clerk pointed out as the shortest and most convenient course to their destination. Soon the east end of the priory chapel was visible, basking in the broad light of the harvest moon, then riding up full and unclouded towards her zenith. Buttress and oriel were weltering in her beam, and the feathery pinnacles sprang out sharp and clear into the blue sky. The shadows were thrown back in masses deep and unbroken more huge in proportion to the unknown depths through which the eye could not penetrate.

"There—again! 'Tis a footstep on our track!" said the clerk, abruptly breaking upon the reverie of his companion.

"'Tis but the tread of the roused deer; man's bolder footstep falls not so lightly," was the reply; but this did not quiet the apprehensions of the querist, whose terrors were again stealing upon him. Their path

was up a little glen, down which the mill-stream, now released from its daily toil, brawled happily along, as if rejoicing in its freedom. Near the mill, on a point of land formed by an abrupt bend of the stream, stood the storehouse or grange. It was an ample structure, serving at times for purposes not immediately connected with its original design. A small chamber was devoted to the poorer sort of travellers, who craved a night's lodging on their journey. Beneath was a place of confinement, for the refractory vassals and serfs, when labouring under their master's displeasure. It was here the garrulous clerk said he had been scared by the ghost, and his reluctance to proceed evidently increased as he drew nearer. He did not fail to point out the spot, but resolutely refused to budge a step farther.

"We had best return," said he; "I have told thee what I know of the matter."

"And what should scare thee so mightily, friend," said De Poininges, "from out the prior's grange? Methinks, these ghosts of thine had a provident eye to their bellies. These haunters to the granary had less objection to the victuals than to a snuff of the wind before cock-crow."

"I know not," replied Amen, rather doggedly; "'tis all I heard, though there be more that live hereabout than the prior and his monks, I trow."

"Thou hast been here ofttimes o' nights?" carelessly inquired the other.

"I have, upon some chance occasion it may be; but since that ugly noise got wind, to which my own ears bear testimony, I was not over-curious to pass within hearing, though it were only the rogues, some said, that were mulcting the flour-sacks."

"But thou knowest there was a hint dropped a while ago at the hostel, that the maiden, whom thou hast now forgotten, methinks, had some connection with this marvellous tale of thine; and now, it seems, I am to believe 'tis but the knaves or the rats purloining the

prior's corn! Hark thee, friend," said De Poininges, in a stern tone, "no more evasion: no turn or equivocation shall serve thee: out with it and lead on, or——"

A bright flash from his falchion here revealed the peril that he threatened.

"*Miserere mei*—Oh,—*Salve et!*——"

"Silence, knave, and pass quickly; but remember, if I catch thee devising any sleight or shuffle, this sharp point shall quicken thee to thy work. It may prove mighty efficacious, too, as a restorative for a lapsed memory."

"I'll tell thee all!—but—hold that weapon a little back, I prithee. Nay—nay, thou wouldest not compass a poor man's death in such haste."

"Lead on, then, but be discreet," said De Poininges softly, at the same time pushing him forward at his sword's point.

"Here is some help to mine errand, or my craft fails me this bout."

After many qualms and wry faces, De Poininges, by piecemeal, acquired the following intelligence:

One night, this honest clerk being with a friend on a predatory excursion to the prior's storehouse, they heard a muffled shriek and a sharp scuffle at some distance. Being outside the building, and fearing detection, they ran to hide themselves under a detached shed, used as a depository for firewood and stray lumber. Towards this spot, however, the other parties were evidently approaching. Presently three or four men, whom they judged to be the prior's servants, came nigh, bearing a female. They entered into the shed, and proceeded to remove a large heap of turf. Underneath seemed to be one of those subterraneous communications generally contrived as a retreat in times of peril; at any rate, they disappeared through the opening, and the clerk and his worthy associate effected their escape unobserved.

Fear of detection, and of the terrible retribution that would follow, hitherto kept the secret undivulged. There could be little doubt that this female was Margaret de la Bech; and her person, whether living or dead, had become a victim to the well-known lawless disposition of the prior.

They were now at the entrance to a low gateway, from which a short path to the left led them directly towards the spot. Entering the shed, they commenced a diligent search; but the terror and confusion of the clerk had prevented such accuracy of observation as could enable him to discover the opening, which they in vain attempted to find, groping their way suspiciously in the dark.

"Softly, softly!" said the clerk, listening. A low murmur came from the opposite corner, like the muttering of one holding audible communion with his own spirit. De Poininges listened too, and he fancied it was a female voice. Presently he heard one of those wild and uncouth ditties, a sort of chant or monotonous song, which, to the terrified psalm-singer, sounded like the death-wail of some unfortunate ghost.

The following words only became sufficiently distinct:

"The sunbeam came on a billow of flame,
But its light, like thine, is done:
Life's tangled coil, with all its toil,
Is broken ere 'tis run.

"The kite may love the timid dove,
The hawk be the raven's guest;
But none shall dare that hawk to scare
From his dark and cloud-wreathed nest!

"Wail on, ye fond maidens,
Death lurks in the cloud;
The storm and the billow
Are weaving a shroud:

"There's a wail on the wind;
Ere its track on the main,
A light shall be quenched,
Ne'er to kindle again!"

"Surely I have heard that voice aforetime," thought De Poininges. It was too peculiar for him to mistake. The woman had loitered in his path a few hours before. It seemed her brain was somewhat disturbed: a wanderer and an outcast in consequence, she had here taken shelter ofttimes for the night. He determined to accost her; a feeling of deference prompted him, a superstitious notion, arising from an idea then prevalent, that a superior light was granted to those individuals in whom the light of reason was extinct. He approached with caution, much to the terror and distress of his companion.

"It is crazy Isabel," said he, "and the dark spirit is upon her!" But De Poininges was not in a mood to feel scared with this intimation. The way was intricate, and he stumbled over a heap of dried fuel. The noise seemed to arrest her attention for a moment; but she again commenced her song, paying little heed to this interruption. On recovering his position, he was about to speak, when, to his great surprise, she thus accosted him:

"I have tarried long for thee. Haste—equip for the battle—and then,

'My merry men all,
Round the greenwood tree,
How gallant to ride
With a gay ladye.'

"I am crazed, belike. Good wot; but I can ride o'er the neck of a proud prior.

'And the moon shone clear,
In the blue heavens, where

The stars twinkle through her veil of light :
There they gave me a merry shooting star,
And I rolled round the wain with my golden car,
But I leapt on the lightning's flash, beside
The queen of this murky night ! ' "

" Crazed, indeed ! " thought De Poininges.

" Hush," said she ; " I'll tell thee a secret." She drew a light from some concealed recess, and flashing it full in the face of the intruder, seemed to enjoy the effect wonderfully. On a sudden her brow wrinkled, and the dark billows came over her spirit as she exclaimed :

" But,

' Thou hast work to do,
Or we may rue
The thieving trade.'

" Go to—I must be calm. The spirit goeth forth, and I may not wander again. But my poor head : it burns here—here ! " And she put her hand tenderly on that of De Poininges, raising it to her brow, which throbbed violently. She started back, as from some sudden recollection, gazing intently on his countenance.

" I know it—the vision tarrieth not. Now," she said—crossing herself with great solemnity, and with apparent composure, as if all trace of her malady had disappeared—" we must away. Follow ; yet will I first set yon rogue to watch." She sought the terrified man of canticles, and, speaking in a low tone, raised her hand as though with some terrible denunciation in case of disobedience. Immediately she returned, and, pointing to a heap of loose stuff, began to throw it aside.

" Here—here ! "

But De Poininges hesitated, thinking it a somewhat dubious adventure to follow a mad woman, it might be, in quest of her wits. Seeing his unwillingness to proceed, she whispered something in his ear which

wrought a marvellous change. He looked as if petrified with wonder, but he followed now without shrinking. They entered by a narrow door, curiously concealed. On its closing after them, De Poininges and his companion seemed shut out from the world—as if the link were suddenly broken which bound them to earth and its connections.

The first sensation was that of chilliness and damp accompanied by a mouldering vapour, like that from the charnel-house or the grave. Their way was down a winding and broken staircase ; at the bottom a straight passage led them on to a considerable distance. Damps oozing from the walls made the path more and more tiresome and slippery as they proceeded. Shortly it became channelled with slime, and absolutely loathsome. The bloated reptile crawled across their path ; and De Poininges beheld stone coffins piled on each side of the vault. Passing these, another flight of steps brought them to a low archway, at the extremity of which a grated door, now unbarred, led into a cell seemingly contrived as a place of punishment for the refractory or sinning brethren, who might be doomed to darkness and solitude as an expiation of their offence. The only furniture it contained was a wretched pallet, on which, as the light flashed doubtfully, De Poininges thought he beheld a female. He snatched the light, and eagerly bent over the couch. With a shout of joy he exclaimed :

" Be praised, ye saints, 'tis she ! "

It was the wasted and squalid form of Margaret de la Bech. She raised her eyes towards him, but they were vacant and wandering. It was soon evident that her reason was impaired, and the spirit still inhabiting that lovely tenement was irrevocably obscured. Cruel had been her suffering. Crimes too foul to name—but we draw a veil over the harrowing recital ! When the last horrible act was consummated the light of her soul was put out and her consciousness extinguished.

To meet thus! A living inhumation, where the body exists but as the spirit's sepulchre! It were better they had been consigned to oblivion, shut up and perishing in the dark womb of the grave. The cry of vengeance had gone up, but was offered in vain for a season. The present period of existence was not allotted for its fulfilment. It was permitted to this monster that he should yet triumph unpunished—his measure of iniquity was not yet full.

The limbs of the unconscious sufferer were pinioned: the fiend-like mercy of her tormentors prevented her own hands from becoming the instruments of her release. De Poininges restored her to freedom; but, alas! she knew it not. The thick veil which Heaven's mercy drew upon her spirit rendered her insensible to outward impressions. He raised her in his arms, bearing her forth from that loathed scene of darkness and disgrace; and when the pure breath of the skies once more blew upon her, it seemed as though it awakened up a faint glimmer in the dying lamp. She looked round with eagerness, and De Poininges thought some ray of intelligence began to brighten, as objects again appeared to develop their hidden trains of association on the memory; but the light was mercifully extinguished ere she could discover the fearful realities of her despair, and she again relapsed into hopeless and utter inanity.

They were still loitering in the little shed, the clerk groaning out a sad and mournful chant. De Poininges appeared unable to arouse himself to the exigencies of the moment, when Isabel, wildly waving her torch towards the entrance, cried:

"To horse—to horse! They will be here presently. Already has the raven snuffed your carcase:

> 'But the bolt whistled through
> The heavens blue,
> And Sir Lionel lay on the battle-field.'"

She seemed to hearken, as though in apprehension of approaching footsteps. De Poininges, roused from this dangerous stupor, prepared to escape ere the prior's emissaries had intelligence of her removal.

They had passed the rivulet in safety, and had just gained the wood near to where the attendants lay in wait with the horses, when an arrow whizzed past De Poininges. For him the shaft was intended, but its destiny was otherwise—the unfortunate chanter lay stretched on the ground in his last agony. De Poininges flew on with redoubled speed.

"Treachery!" he cried. His men knew the signal, and galloped towards him; but their aid was too late. A shackbolt, aimed with a sure hand, pierced him at this moment.

"Take her—Margaret de la Bech! The prior—a murderer—ravisher! Fly to——"

The remaining words fell unuttered. His faithful attendants bore off the lifeless body, together with the hapless Margaret, who was soon placed in safety, far from the relentless fangs of the Prior of Burscough.

Fearful and undeniable was the testimony and accusation they brought, but in vain. No effort was spared to bring upon this monster the just recompense of his crime; yet, from the great scandal which a public execution must have drawn upon the Church, but more especially from the great influence he possessed amongst the nobles and chief dignitaries of the land, not only did he escape unpunished, but he received the King's most gracious pardon, in the twenty-first year of Edward the Third: so true are the following words from an historian of that reign:

"These men had so entrenched themselves in privileges and immunities, and so openly challenged an exemption from all secular jurisdiction, that no civil penalty could be inflicted on them for any malversation in office, and even treason itself was declared to be no canonical offence."

THE EAGLE AND CHILD

" She's over the muir,
An' over the border,
An' ower the blue hills far awa' ;
With her callant, I trow,—
On his saddle-bow,
While the mist-wreaths around them fa'."

THE main facts of the following narrative, lying scattered through a wide field of barren inquiry, the author has been at considerable pains to collect and arrange in a continuous narrative.

Little needs be said by way of introduction, the traditions here interwoven with the general history being mostly of a trivial nature, and not at all interfering with the facts developed by the historians and rhymers who have illustrated the annals of the house of Stanley. These accounts, exaggerated and distorted as they inevitably must have been, may yet, in the absence of more authentic testimony, afford a pretty accurate glimpse at the real nature of those events, however they may have been disguised by fiction and misstatement. Where tradition is our only guide we must follow implicitly, satisfied that her taper was lighted at the torch of Truth, though it may gleam doubtfully and partially through the mists and errors of succeeding ages.

One source from whence we have derived some information, though well known to the comparative few who have explored these by-paths of history, may not be thought uninteresting to the general reader, especially as it is connected with the most eventful portion of our narrative.

An ancient metrical account of the Stanleys, Earls of Derby, is contained in some uncouth rhymes, written about the year 1562, by Thomas Stanley, Bishop of Sodor and

Man,* and son of that Sir Edward Stanley, who, for his valour, at Flodden, was created Lord Monteagle. There are two copies of these verses in the British Museum: one amongst Cole's papers (vol. xxix. page 104), and the other in the Harleian MSS. (541). Mr. Cole prefaces his transcript with the following notice:—"The history of the family of Stanley, Earls of Derby, wrote in verse about the reign of King Henry the Eighth from a MS. now in possession of Lady Margaret Stanley, copied for me by a person who has made many mistakes, and sent to me by my friend Mr. Allen, Rector of Tarporley, in 1758.—W. Cole."

The MS. formerly belonged to Sir John Crewe, of Utkinton, and was given by Mr. Ardern, in 1757, to Lady Margaret Stanley.

The commencement of this metrical history is occupied in dilating upon the pleasure resulting from such an undertaking; and although the flow of the verse is not of remarkable smoothness, yet it hardly furnishes an apology for Seacome's mistake, who, in his "History of the House of Stanley," printed the first fifty lines as prose. The reverend versifier rehearses how Stanley sprang from Audley, and then shows the manner in which his ancestors became possessors of Stourton and Hooton. He dwells upon the joust betwixt the Admiral of Hainault and Sir John Stanley, the second brother of the house of Stanley of Hooton;†

* "Thomas Stanley, Bishop of Man, was a cadet of the noble family of the Stanleys, Earls of Derby; and, after he had spent some time in this and another university abroad, returned to his native country (Lancashire), became rector of Winwick and Wigan therein; as also of Badsworth, in the diocese of York, and dignified in the church. At length, upon the vacancy of the see of the Isle of Man, he was made bishop thereof, but when, I cannot justly say; because he seems to have been bishop in the beginning of King Edward VI., and was really bishop of that place before the death of Dr. Man, whom I have before mentioned under the year 1556. This Thomas Stanley paid his last debt to nature in the latter end of 1570, having had the character when young of a tolerable poet of his time."—Wood's *Athenæ Oxonienses*.

† This extract is from an interesting pamphlet printed for private circulation only, by Thomas Heywood, Esq., of Manchester, entitled, "The Earls of Derby, and the Verse Writers and Poets of the 16th and 17th Centuries, 1825."

Then follows the account, more particularly developed in our own story, of the adventures and moving accidents which have been liberally used to adorn the "Garland" of his descendant William Earl of Derby. "For many generations this was the recognised chronicle of the family, until, in the time of James the First, a clergyman of Chester translated the rhymes of the Bishop into English, carefully retaining the mistakes of the original, and adding long and dull disquisitions of his own."

In the days of our valiant King Edward, while the fame of Cressy and Poictiers was fresh and stirring in all true and loyal hearts, while the monarchs of two powerful kingdoms were held captive in these realms, lived a worthy knight, of whom we had a brief notice in the preceding narrative. Sir Thomas Lathom of Lathom was a nobleman of great wealth and possessions. According to the Calendarium Rotulorum from the Charter Rolls in the Tower, he held lands, besides, in Knouselegh, Childewall, Roby, and Aulusargh. In Liverpool, he was proprietor of the tower, a structure of but little note until rebuilt and fortified by Sir John Stanley during his government in Ireland, of which we shall have more to say anon.

Sir Thomas married, in the year 1343, the youngest daughter of Sir Hamon Massey of Dunham Massey, in the adjoining county of Chester. Twelve years had since that period elapsed at the time when our story begins; and though earnestly desiring male issue, that his name and race might be perpetuated, yet was the sole fruit of their union hitherto a daughter, named Isabel, then just entering on her tenth year. Her winning and surpassing comeliness proved no solace to his disappointment. He grew moodish and melancholy in the midst of his vast wealth; apprehending the utter extinction of his name, and the intrusion of a stranger on his birthright. Hopeless of other issue by his own lady, he had recourse to unlawful means for

this purpose, which procured for him a sore chastisement in the end, as our narrative will show.

In that neighbourhood dwelt a comely maiden, the only daughter of a substantial yeoman, of the name of Oskatell. This damsel, pleasing the amorous fancy of Sir Thomas, fell an easy prey to his arts and persuasions. Though concealed from her friends, their too frequent intercourse at length became visible in the birth of a son, greatly to the joy of the father, who meditated nothing less than to adopt this illegitimate babe for the perpetuation of his name. Yet were there preliminaries of no mean importance to be adjusted, as all men who have wives may well conceive. The lady of Lathom must first be consulted ; but probabilities were strongly against the supposition that she would tamely submit to this infringement on the rights of her child by the interposition of a bastard. Nay, she had beforetime hinted that some individual of the name, of moderate wealth and good breeding, might in time be found for a suitable alliance. Still, the success of his scheme was an object that lay deeply at his heart, and he grew more and more anxious and perplexed.

One evening, as he wandered out disconsolately in the company of an old, trusty servant to whom he had imparted the secret, they came to a desert place in the park, nigh to where a pair of eagles had from time immemorial built their nest. A project struck him which promised fair to realize his wishes. After a multitude of schemes subservient to the main purpose had been thrown out and abandoned, the whole plot was finally unfolded in the following manner :

A message was conveyed to the mother overnight, that betimes on the following morning the babe, richly clad, should be held in readiness, and a trusty servant would forthwith convey him to the hall. She was peremptorily forbidden to follow ; and in her great joy at this announcement, naturally supposing that a more favourable posture of affairs had arisen between

Sir Thomas and his lady on the subject, she cheerfully consented to this unexpected deprivation, confident that it was to the furthering of her child's welfare and advancement. The infant, smiling, and unconscious of the change, was taken from his mother's lap, his swaddling clothes carefully folded together, and committed to the care of the aged domestic.

Little was the anxious mother aware of the great peril he had to undergo ere the goal which bounded her anticipations was won.

It was the soft twilight of a summer's morning, and the little birds had begun to chirp their matins, and the lark to brush the dew from her speckled breast, waiting for the first gaze of the sun. The old man pressed the infant closer to his bosom as he drew nigh to the steep acclivity, the solitary dwelling of the eagle. He kissed the babe ; then looking round, fearful of intruders, he laid the wicker cradle at the foot of the precipice, and sprang into a dark thicket close by, as if to watch for the descent of the rapacious bird.

Leaving the child, we turn to Sir Thomas, who on that morning, as was his wont, together with his dame, awoke betimes, but he was sooner astir and more anxious and bustling than usual. Their custom was, awaking with the sun, to begin the day with a quiet stroll about the grounds ; and on this eventful morning their walk chanced happily towards the eagle's nest. Being something farther and more out of their common track, it was noticed good-humouredly by the lady, who seemed to possess a more than ordinary portion of hilarity on the occasion. Evidently under some exciting influence, their walk was unconsciously protracted.

In a gloomy dell, not far from the eyrie, Sir Thomas stood still, in the attitude of listening. The lady, too, was silent and alarmed, but no intimation of danger was visible. Her own senses, though, seemed to gather acuteness—a circumstance by no means rare in the vicinity of an unusually timid and listening companion,

who braces our perceptions to the tension of his own. Soon, however, the short and feeble cry of the babe was heard, when the knight sprang forward, feigning great astonishment at the discovery. Evidently dropped from the talons of the bird, it was looked upon as a special gift of Providence, a deposit direct from the skies; to have rejected which would have been a heinous offence, and an unlawful contravention of the designs of the Giver. Accordingly the infant was taken home and carefully nursed, being baptized by the name of Oskatell.

The good lady became surprisingly enamoured of the little foundling, believing his adoption was dictated by the will of Heaven; and to this decision its father readily acceded. Sir Thomas, to give the greater sanction to this supposed miracle, as well as to remove all suspicion of fraud from the prying eyes of a censorious world, assumed for his crest an eagle on the wing, proper, looking round as though for something she had lost.

The child grew in years and stature, being liberally furnished in all things according with the dignity he was destined to receive. Sir Thomas purposed the sharing of his wealth equally between his children, a measure which had the entire concurrence of Lady de Lathom. Though younger by some years, Oskatell was generally considered by the world as the future husband of Isabella, but Sir Thomas, aware of danger on this head, early impressed them with some notion of consanguinity, and intimated the impossibility of their union. This prohibition, settling on a womanish fancy, might naturally have been expected to operate in a manner the reverse of his intention. Yet we do not find from history that Isabella ever cherished for him any other sentiments than those arising from a sisterly regard.

Growing up to man's estate, he sought the court of King Edward, where, though of a peaceable temper, his soul was stirred to participate in the gallant feats incident to that scene of martial enterprise.

Isabella was now in the full summer, or, it might be, ripening into the rich autumn of her beauty. Her father would by no means have permitted her union save with one of the highest rank, to which her gentle blood and princely inheritance entitled her. And though not a few hitherto, of noble birth and endowments, had sought the honour of her alliance, yet her heart was untouched, and in the end her suitors forbore their homage.

All the country was now mightily roused with the news of the French champion, who, together with sundry of his companions-in-arms, had challenged the English nation to match them with the like number at a solemn joust and tourney, and of the great gallantry and personal accomplishments of Sir John, then Captain Stanley, who had first taken up the gauntlet in his country's behalf. The lists were prepared. The meeting, by the king's command, was appointed to be holden at Winchester, where the royal court was expected to witness this splendid achievement. Oskatell, returning home, strongly importuned his sister to accompany him to the show, it being then deemed a pleasant recreation for many a fair and delicate maiden to view their champions hack and hew each other without mercy. Isabella, unceasingly urged to this excursion, at length set out for the city of Winchester, followed by a numerous train of attendants, where, in due time, they arrived, mingling in the bustle and dissipation incident to these festivities.

Young Stanley was the second son of Sir William Stanley, Lord of Stanley and Stourton. As a younger branch of the house, he commenced his career, it is said, under the command of his relative, Lord Audley; but this appears something doubtful. The battle of Poictiers, in which Captain Stanley is said to have been, was fought in 1357; and here he must have battled in petticoats, seeing that his father was but married 26 Edward III, and, consequently, making due allowance

for accidents and irregularities, young Stanley, as the second son, could not then have proceeded beyond his third year! a precocity unprecedented, we believe, even in the annals of that fighting era. The conflicting statements we meet with about this time, both traditionary and recorded, we cannot attempt to reconcile. Sufficient information happily exists, however, on which no doubt arises; and by the aid of that we proceed with our narrative.

Stanley, according to some, having been a great traveller, had improved himself diligently in the art of war; and, as the old chronicles quaintly relate, "he visited most of the courts of Europe, even as far as Constantinople; wherein he made such advances in the school of Mars, that his superior skill in arms was generally applauded in every country he passed through." So distinguished and widely-extended a reputation for bravery could not fail to provoke the pride and envy of all Christendom, whereupon the young Admiral of Hainault, one of the bravest men of his time, together with divers gentlemen of the French court, defied the whole kingdom to a passage of arms, the result of which challenge has been shown.

Great was the confluence and resort to the city of Winchester, it being noised abroad as though the king would distinguish the affray by his presence; wondrous the stir and bustle of the soldiers, guards, attendants, with hordes of idlers and hangers-on, from the vast array of knights and nobles, who came either to see or to share in the approaching trial. The splendid banners, the heraldic pomp, and barbaric grandeur of their retinues, augmenting with every fresh arrival, made the streets one ever-moving pageant for many days before the conflict began. Isabella had full leisure to observe, from her own lattice, the gay and costly garniture, and the glittering appointments of the warriors, with the pageants and puerile diversions suited to the taste and capacity of the ignorant crowds by which they were

followed. The king's mummers were arrived, together with many other marvels in the shape of puppet-shows and " motions " enacting the " old vice " ; Jonas and the whale, Nineveh, the Creation, and a thousand unintelligible but equally gratifying and instructive devices , one of which, we are told, was " four giants, a unicorn, a camel, an ass, a dragon, a hobby-horse, and sixteen naked boys ! "

The crowds attracted by these spectacles were immense, and the city nigh choked with the torrents that set in from every quarter.

From the windows of the houses, where lodged the knights appointed to the encounter, hung their several coats, richly emblazoned, rousing forth many a shout and hurrah, as one and another symbol was recognized to be the badge of some favourite chief ; but more than all, was the young Stanley's escutcheon favoured by the fickle breath of popular opinion, which made it needful that a double guard should be mounted near his dwelling—a precaution, moreover, rendered needful by the many tumults among the different partisans and retainers, not always ending without bloodshed. The arrival of the king, however, soon changed the current of the wondering multitude. Edward was now in his sixty-fourth year, and the fiftieth of his reign. Though the decline of his life did not correspond with the splendid and noisy scenes which had illustrated the earlier periods of his history, yet he still manifested the same restless and undaunted spirit, ever considered as the prevailing attribute of his character. Towards the close of his career he had the mortification to endure the loss of his foreign possessions, having been baffled in every attempt to defend them. He felt, too, the decay of his authority at home, from the inconstancy and discontents of his subjects. Though his earlier years had been spent amid the din and tumult of war and the business of the camp, yet was he, at this period, almost wholly given up to pleasure and the grossest of sensual indul-

gencies. Alice Pierce, to whom he was immoderately attached, had gained an ascendancy over him so dangerous that the Parliament remonstrated, with a courage and firmness worthy of a more enlightened era, and in the end he was obliged to remove her from court. Sometimes the spirit of his youth awoke ; the glory of past ages was stirred up within him ; and, like the aged war-horse neighing to the shrill note of the trumpet, he greeted the approaching tournament with something of his wonted ardour—though now but an expiring flash, brightening a moment ere it was extinguished.

The day rose calm and unclouded. The thin haze of the morning had disappeared, and an atmosphere of more than common brilliancy succeeded. Through a great part of the preceding night the armourers had been busily employed altering and refitting the equipments, and the dawn had already commenced ere their labours were suspended. The lists were carefully scrutinized, and all chance of foul play averted. The priests, too, had blessed the armour and weapons from magic spells and " foul negromancie."

The barriers were built of stout boards, firmly riveted together ; the royal pavilion being on the southern side, richly canopied and embroidered with costly devices. Galleries were provided for the nobles, not a few of whom, with their courtly dames, were expected to be present.

The lists were sixty paces in length and forty in breadth between the platforms on which the knight's tents were erected. The ground within was made hard and level, the loose stones and other impediments being carefully removed. There were two entrances, east and west, well guarded and strongly fenced with wooden bars about seven feet high, so that a horse might not leap over. The tents of the warriors were fancifully decorated, every one having his shield newly emblazoned and hung out in front, where the pages and esquires watched, guarding vigilantly these sacred treasures.

Nothing was heard but the hoarse call of the trumpet, the clank of mail, and the prancing of horses, pawing and eager for the battle.

Long before the appointed hour the whole city was in motion. Isabella, too, whose bright eyes had not closed since the first gleam had visited her chamber, was early astir. An ugly dream, it is said, troubled her. Though of ripe years, yet, as we have noticed before, love had not yet aimed his malicious shafts at her bosom, nor even tightened his bowstring as she tripped by, defying his power; so that the dream, which in others would appear but as the overflowing of a youthful and ardent imagination, seemed to her altogether novel and unaccountable, raising up new faculties, and endowing her with a train of feelings heretofore unknown. No wonder that her looks were betrayers: her whole deportment manifested some hidden power controlling her high spirit, insomuch that her favourite maiden was fain to abate her morning gossip; yet Isabella was not averse to speech, though the words seemed to linger heavily on her tongue, losing that lightness and exuberance which betokens the mind free from care and oppression.

She had dreamed that in her own wild woods a knight accosted her: she attempted to fly, but was withheld by some secret influence. He raised his visor, smiling as he bent his knee in token of homage. He was a stranger. Grasping her hand, she felt the cold hard pressure of his gauntlet. She awoke, and sure enough there was the impression as of some mailed hand upon her delicate fingers! While marvelling at this strange adventure, a deep slumber again overpowered her, when a graceful cavalier, unarmed, was at her side. He raised her hand to his lips, and her whole soul responded to the touch. He was about to speak, when her father suddenly appeared, with a dark and forbidding aspect. He began to chide, and the stranger, with a glance she could not erase from her recollection, disappeared.

It was this glance which subdued her proud spirit to its influence. Her maidenly apprehensions became aroused ; she attempted, but in vain, to drive away the intruder : the vision haunted her deeply—too deeply for her repose ! Marks of some outward impression were yet visible on her hand, whether from causes less occult than the moving phantasma of the mind, is a question that would resist all our powers of solution. In a mood thus admirably fitted for the encountering of some marvellous adventure, did she mount her little white palfrey, all pranked out and caparisoned for the occasion.

Followed by a train of some length, with Oskatell by her side, the daughter of the house of Lathom allured the eyes of not a few as she passed on. Many a stately knight bent his head, and many an inquiry was directed to the esquires and attendants as she drew near.

The scene of this renowned combat was a spacious plain below the city, on the opposite side of the river Itchen. The chalky cliffs, which obtained for it the name of Caer Gwint, or the White City, were studded with gay and anxious multitudes, whose hopes and fears have long been swept off by the waves of passing generations.

Winchester being one of the fixed markets or staples for wool appointed by King Edward, the city had risen in power and affluence above its neighbours. Yet the plague, by which it was almost depopulated some years before, had considerably abated its magnificence. But the favour of royalty still clung to it, and Arthur's " Round Table " attested its early claims to this distinguishing character—a monarch's residence. The castle, where the Round Table is still shown, was then a building of great strength, and, enlivened by the king's presence, displayed many a staff and pennon from its stately battlements.

Isabella passed by the fortress just as the trumpets announced the near approach of the king down the

covered way. The chains of the drawbridge were lowered, and presently issued forth the armed retinue of the monarch. Isabella and her train were obliged to remain awhile as idle spectators.

The king, though old and infirm, yet retained his lofty and commanding appearance. His charger was armed with the *chanfrons* and gamboised housings, having thereon the royal arms, and proudly did the conscious beast paw and champ, as if rejoicing under his burden.

Edward was dressed in a glittering surcoat of crimson silk, worked with lions and *fleurs-de-lis*. His helmet was cylindrical, surmounted by a lion as its crest. Round the rim was a coronet of gold, worked with *fleurs-de-lis* and oak leaves. A gorget and tippet covering the shoulders was fastened beneath the chin, giving the head a stiff but imposing air of command. He carried a short truncheon, which he wielded with great dexterity ; yet his armour, though light and of the finest temper, seemed more cumbersome to him now than in former days.

The royal standard of England, thus described, was borne before him :—It was from eight to nine yards in length, the ground blue and red, containing, in the first division, the lion of England imperially crowned. In chief, a coronet of *crosses patee* and *fleurs-de-lis*, between two clouds irradiated. In base, a cloud between two coronets. In the next division the charges were, in chief a coronet, in base an irradiated cloud. In the third, the dexter chief and sinister base was likewise an irradiated cloud ; the sinister and dexter chief a coronet, as before. Motto, " Dieu et mon droyt." The whole of this procession was one vast masquerade of pomp, little betokening the frailty and folly which it enveloped. Though to all outward show fair and glistening, yet was there a heavy gloom brooding over the nation. Prince Edward, the flower of chivalry, usually called the Black Prince, from the colour of his

armour, lay then grievously sick, and the whole hope and welfare of the land seemed to hang on his recovery. The known ambition of John of Gaunt was a main source of alarm and anxiety. "Edward had, however," says the historian, "declared his grandson heir and successor to the crown, and thereby cut off all the hopes of the Duke of Lancaster, if he ever had the temerity to entertain any."

Not forgetting his former homage to the sex, the king's eye lingered on the form of Isabella, but she drew back, daunted by the ardour of his gaze. Oskatell saw the impression she had made, in nowise displeased, hoping some ray of royal favour would be reflected to him from the beam that already dawned on his companion.

We now pass on to the field, where everything was in readiness for the combat. The knights had heard Mass and made confession, these being the requisite preparatives to the noble deeds they had that day vowed to perform. The heralds had made the usual proclamation against the use of magic, unlawful charms, and other like devices of the devil, when a loud flourish of trumpets announced the approach of Stanley, who first entered the lists mounted on a grey charger furnished with the chevron, or war-saddle, then of great use in withstanding the terrific shock of the assailant, being high up in front, and furnished at the back like an arm-chair. He was equipped in a full suit of Italian armour, displaying a steel cuirass of exquisite workmanship, deemed at that time a novel but elegant style of defence, and destined soon to supersede the purpoint or gamboised work called mail. If well tempered, it was found to resist the stroke of the lance without being either pierced or bent, nor was it liable to be pushed through into the body, as was sometimes the case with the "*mailles*" when the wambas or hoketon was wanting underneath. His shield was thus marshalled: argent; on a bend azure, three stags' heads cabossed. In the

sinister chief, a crescent denoted his filiation; underneath was the motto "Augmenter." The shield itself or pavise was large, made of wood covered with skin, and surrounded with a broad rim of iron.

He looked gracefully round, first lowering his lance in front of the king's pavilion, and afterwards to the fair dames who crowded the galleries on each side. Whether from accident or design his eyes rested on Isabella with a strong expression of earnestness rather than curiosity. Doubtless, the noble representatives of the house of Lathom excited no slight interest among the spectators, and the young hero might have formed some yet undeveloped anticipations on this head.

She blushed deeply at this public and unexpected notice. The recollection of her dream made the full tide of feeling set in at once in this direction, much to her consternation and dismay; but when, happening to turn hastily round, a silken bandage, loosened by the sudden movement from some part of her dress, was carried off by the wind and deposited within the lists, she was greatly embarrassed; and her confusion was not a little increased as the young gallant with great dexterity transferred it to the point of his lance. At this choice of his "lady love," a loud shout arose from the multitude; and Isabella, now the object of universal regard, would have retired, but that the density of the crowd, and the inconvenient structure of the building, rendered it impossible.

Another flourish of trumpets announced the approach of the young Admiral of Hainault. His armour was blue and white, beautifully wrought and inlaid with silver. His steed was black, having the suit and furniture of the war-horse complete. The *croupière* and *estival*, together with the *chanfron*, were of the most costly description. A plume of white feathers decorated his casque, extending his athletic form into almost gigantic proportions.

The needful ceremonies were gone through; a deep

and almost breathless silence succeeded, like the stillness that precedes the first swing of the storm. The trumpets sounded ; the sharp click of the lances was heard falling into the rest ; and the first rush was over. The noise of the shock was like the burst of the tempest on the forest boughs. Through the dust, the horses were seen to recoil upon their haunches ; but as it blew heavily away, the warriors had regained their upright position, having sustained no injury, save by the shivering of their lances with the stroke. A loud shout of applause ensued ; and the esquires being at hand with fresh weapons, each knight was too eager for the fray to lose a moment in requesting the usual signal. Again their coursers' feet seemed to spurn the earth. At this onset the French knight bent back in his saddle, whether from subtlety or accident was not known, but there was a loud clamour ; and the Frenchman, recovering himself, spurred on his steed with great vigour, perhaps hoping to take his adversary at unawares ; but the latter, darting aside with agility, the other's lance ran full against the boards, and in deep vexation he came back to the charge.

Trembling with choler, he hardly restrained himself until the prescribed signal ; then, as if he would make an end of his opponent, he aimed his weapon with a direct thrust towards the heart ; but Stanley, confident in his own might, was fully prepared for the blow, as the event sufficiently proved ; for the French knight was seen to reel from his saddle, the point of his enemy's lance being driven completely through his armour. He rolled backwards on the ground, and so vigorous had been the attack, that his horse's back was broken, and they lay together, groaning piteously, besmeared with blood and dust, to the sore dismay of his companions. Stanley suddenly alighted, and helped the pages to undo his armour ; but ere his beaver could be unclasped he had fainted by loss of blood, and being borne off the field, he shortly afterwards expired.

The king was mightily pleased with this great prowess of the victor, insomuch that he knighted him on the spot, and, according to the old ballad, gave him goodly manors—

"For his hire,
Wing, Tring, and Iving, in Buckinghamshire."

He had so won, likewise, on the hitherto impenetrable disposition of Isabella, that when he came to render his homage at her feet, she trembled and could scarcely give the customary reply.

Raising his visor, and uncovering his helmet from the grand guard—a plate protecting the left side of the face, shoulder, and breast—he made a lowly obeisance at the gate of his mistress's pavilion, at the same time presenting the stolen favour he had now so nobly won. With a tremulous hand she bound it round his arm.

"Nay, thy chaplet, lady," shouted a score of tongues from the inquisitive spectators. Isabella untied a rich chaplet of goldsmith's work, ornamented with rose-garlands, from her hair, and threw it over his helmet. Still armed with the gauntlets, which, either through hurry or inadvertence, he had neglected to throw aside, as was the general courtesy for the occasion, the knight seized her hand, and with a grasp gentle for any other occasion, pressed it to his lips. The lady uttered a subdued shriek, whether from pain or surprise, it boots not now to inquire ; mayhap, it was the remembrance of the mailed hand she had felt in her dream, and to which her fingers, yet tingling with the pressure, bore a sufficient testimony. Sir John bent lowlier than before, with one hand on his breast, in token of contrition. A thousand strange fancies, shapeless and undefined, rushed by, as the maiden looked on the warrior. It was the very crisis of her dream ; her heart seemed as though it would have leapt the walls of its tenement—and she was fain to hide her face under the folds of her mantle.

"Now, on my halidom," said the king, "there be

two doves whose cooing would be the better for a little honest speech. Poor hearts ! it were a pity their tongues had betrayed their desire. Fitz-Walter, summon them hither."

The blushing Isabella was conducted to the royal presence, where the king was graciously pleased to impress a salute on her rich and glowing cheek—no mean honour from so gracious and gallant a monarch, who, though old, was yet accounted a mighty adept in the discernment of female beauty, he never being known to suffer contact of the royal lip with aught but the fairest and most comely of the sex.

" Sir John, I commend thee to thy mistress. A dainty choice. She is ' The Queen of Beauty ' for the day, and to-night we command your presence at the banquet."

" My gracious liege," said Isabella, pointing to Oskatell, " I have a brother ; unto his care it is but meet that I entrust myself ; and he——"

" His person and endowments," interrupted the king, " are not unknown to us. I do honour thee by ennobling him ; for though our ladies' brightness be all too dazzling to receive a glory from us, yet peradventure for their sakes our courtesy is vouchsafed. Rise, Sir Oskatell de Lathom."

Again a flourish of trumpets proclaimed the king's favour, who with many more gracious speeches won the affection of all who heard him that day.

Several other jousts and "gentle passages" were held, the success of which falling principally with the English combatants, the boasting pride of France was again humbled before the king, who seemed to renew his former victories at this memorable " *Tourney of Winchester.*"

But Isabella had bartered years of repose for this brief season of intoxicating splendour. The barbed arrow was in her heart, and the more she struggled, the more irreclaimable it grew. Doubtless that unlucky dream had rendered her more susceptible to the wound.

Dreams have this operation ; and whether good or evil they leave an impression that no simple act of the will can efface. It seems to be the work of a power superior to our own, for " the less begetteth not the greater " ; how, then, can the mind originate a train of conceptions, or rather creations, superior to itself—above its own power to control ?

But Isabella was too much engrossed by her feelings to attempt their solution. She lay restless on her couch, but there was no escape. An unquenchable flame was kindled in her soul, that not all the cool appliances of reason could subdue. To-morrow she must depart, and that gay pageant vanish as a dream ; and yet not like her own dream, for that was abiding and indelible. To-morrow the brave knight must withdraw, and the " Queen of Beauty," homaged for a day, give place to another whose reign should be as brief and as unenduring. In this distempered mood, with a heart all moved to sadness, did the Lady Isabel pass the first hours of the following night.

Suddenly the sharp twang of a citerne was heard in the street below her window—nothing new in these piping times of love and minstrelsy ; but so sensitive was the ear now become to exterior impressions, that she started, as though expecting a salutation from the midnight rambler. Her anticipations were in some measure realized, the minstrel pausing beneath her lattice. A wooden balcony projected from it, concealing the musician. Isabella threw a light mantle around her, and rousing one of her maidens, she opened the window. The rich melody came upon her senses through the balmy odour of myrtle boughs and leaves of honeysuckle. The chords were touched with a skilful hand, and the prelude, a wild and extempore commentary on the ballad, was succeeded by the following ditty :

" My ladye love, my ladye love,
The moon through the lift is breaking ;

The sky is bright, and through the night
The queen of love is waking.
Yon little star that twinkleth so,
Fluttering her bright eyes to and fro,
How doth she chide,
That thou shouldst hide,
All joyance thus forsaking.
My ladye love, my ladye love,
The moon through the lift is breaking,
The sky is bright, and through the night
The queen of love is waking."

The singer withdrew; and Isabella was convinced, or her eyes were befooled by her fancy, that, as he emerged from his concealment, his form could be none other than the one her imagination was too familiar with to mistake. He, too, had caught a glance of the listeners, for presently a folded paper was thrown over the balusters, and the minstrel departed. The first light that came through the long low casements revealed all that her hopes anticipated. The billet was from Sir John Stanley, whose regrets, mingled with vows and protestations of love, were to this purport, that he must needs be away before daybreak, on urgent business from the king. He sent a sigh and a love-token, commending himself to her best thoughts, until he should gain his acquittance so far as to visit Lathom.

Passing over the departure, the bustle, and the weariness of a twelve days' journey, let us behold the maiden once more in her pretty bower at Lathom. How changed! The whole assumed a fresh aspect, thus viewed from a different state of the mind. Her favourite spaniel licked her hand, but she did not notice his caresses; all about her was as if the wand of the enchanter had been there, changing its image, each object calling forth a train of sensations heretofore unknown. Even the hangings and figured draperies wore a grim and perturbed expression; and Jephtha's daughter and the

Queen of Sheba looked more dismal and profuse than ever from the dusky arras.

She strayed out, as beforetime, into the woods; but their gloom was more intense, and the very birds seemed to grow sad with her melancholy musings. Their song, that used to be so sprightly, was now subdued and mournful, and all their gay and bubbling hilarity was gone. If she wandered forth towards evening the owl hooted in her path, and the raven croaked above her. She heard not the light matin of the lark. Fancy, stimulated alone by gloomy impressions, laid hold on them only, failing to recognize aught but its own image.

Sir Oskatell and her father had often taken counsel together since his return. Shortly afterwards, Isabella received a summons to attend Sir Thomas in private. What was the precise nature of that interview does not appear, save that the lady withdrew to her chamber, and the brow of Sir Thomas was for a long space moody and disturbed. Sir John Stanley, though of gentle descent, was not endowed with an adequate inheritance, at least for the heiress of Lathom, whose extensive possessions, though shared by Oskatell, were deemed by Sir Thomas of sufficient magnitude to command a connection of higher rank and importance. As a younger brother he could have slight pretensions to patrimony, and save the manors, then but a slender endowment, just granted by King Edward, his profession as a soldier supplied his chief revenue. His exclusive notice of the Lady Isabella at the tournament was quickly conveyed to the ear of Sir Thomas; and, it was said, the latter had vowed that no portion of wealth should descend to his daughter if wedded to Sir John, but that the whole should be settled on Sir Oskatell. "The course of true love never did run smooth." That Sir John Stanley had a watchful eye at the time to the fortune as well as to the person of Isabella, is by some rather freely hinted. This, however,

turns out to be an unfounded calumny, as the events hereafter unfolded will abundantly demonstrate.

Sir John, after vainly endeavouring to avert this cruel purpose, and to win the old man's favour, entered into the service of the king. He hoped that some lucky adventure would enable him to appear with more certainty of success the next time he played the suitor at Lathom.

Isabella, though sorely importuned to the contrary, remained true to her first and only attachment; and Sir Oskatell was likely, in the end, to gather to himself the whole of these vast possessions. A disposition to this effect she had for some time suspected. His conduct, too, was less kindly of late, and he took upon himself an authority more direct and unconditional. Indeed, it seemed but too evident that Sir Oskatell was looked upon as the ultimate possessor. The maiden pined sorely at her lot, and lack of perpetuity in the inheritance. But woman's wits have compassed a sea of impossibilities, and will ever continue irresistible until their beautiful forms shall no longer irradiate these dull mortalities with their presence.

One day an aged minstrel craved admission. Sir Thomas had just retired from the banquet. Isabella and the lady of Lathom were at their usual employment in their private chamber, plying the needle in "Antres vast," and wildernesses of embroidery, along with the maids. The request was granted; soon after which an old man, bending apparently under an accumulation of years and infirmities, entered the apartment. There was a keen scrutinizing restlessness of the eye, stealing through the silvery locks about his brow, that but ill accorded with his apparent decrepitude.

After a very profound obeisance, which the lady-mother scarcely recognized, he addressed himself to his vocation. A mighty indifferent prelude succeeded the arrangement of the strings, then a sort of jig, accented by the toe and head of the performer. After-

wards he broke into a wild and singular extempore, which gradually shaped itself into measure and rhythm, at times beautifully varied, and accompanied by the voice. We shall attempt a more modern and intelligible version of the sentiments he expressed :

SONG.

1.

" Rich round thy brow are the clusters bright,
And thy tresses are like the plume—
The plume of the raven, glossy with light,
Or the ray of the spirit's deep gloom.

2.

" As I gaze, the dim echoes of years that are past
Bring their joys to my bosom in vain ;
For the chords, which their spell once o'er memory cast,
Ne'er shall waken to gladness again ! "

" I hold these minstrels now no better than the croaking of your carrion crow," said the elder lady : " these are not like the songs we used to hear in hall and bower at Dunham Massey. Then "—the old lady forgetting that her own ears had played her false, and her relish for these dainties had departed—" Then," raising her voice and gazing round, as past scenes recurred to her fancy, " how my young heart would leap at the sound of their ditties ! and how I long to hear again ' *Sir Armoric,*' and the ' *Golden Legend,*' and all about the lady with the swine's snout and the silver trough ! "

But Isabella heard not her mother's reminiscences. The minstrel engrossed her attention, absorbing her whole thoughts, it might seem, with the display of his cunning. Her cheek was flushed, and her lip trembled.

Some mysterious faculty there was either in the song or the performer.

Again he poured forth a strain more touching, and of ravishing sweetness :

SONG.

1.

" Smile on, my love ; that sunny smile
Is light and life and joy to thee ;
But, oh, its glance of witchery the while,
Is maddening, hopeless misery to me.

2.

" Another bosom thou mayest bless,
Whose chords shall wake with ecstasy ;
On mine, each thrilling thought thy looks impress
Wakes but the pang of hopeless destiny.

3.

" Smile on, my love ; that sunny smile
Is light and life and joy to thee ;
But oh, its glance of witchery the while,
Is hopeless, maddening misery to me."

These were burning thoughts from the bosom of age ; and had not the old lady's perceptions been somewhat obtuse, she might have guessed the minstrel's purpose. His despair was not so utterly hopeless and without remedy as the purport of his song seemed to forebode —for the morning light saw the bower of Isabella vacant, and her bed undisturbed. She was then far over the blue hills into Staffordshire, where another sun saw her the wife of Sir John Stanley ; immediately after which they departed into Ireland.

Sir Thomas threw the reins on the neck of his choler, and, as tradition reports, did then disinherit her for

ever in favour of Sir Oskatell. How far the latter might be privy to this resolve, or whether Sir Thomas, goaded on aforetime to the aggrandisement of his name, seized the present opportunity only as it served his purpose, both history and tradition leave us without the means of deciding. There does, however, seem reason to suspect some unfair solicitations practised on Sir Thomas, which subsequent occurrences strongly corroborate; but particularly the fact, that on his deathbed he solemnly revoked this injustice, appointing Sir John Stanley his lawful heir, disinheriting Sir Oskatell, save a slight provision hereafter named, and declaring his illegitimacy. We would not lightly throw out an accusation of this nature; but surely an act of retribution so unsparingly administered would not have been put in force, had not past circumstances in some measure rendered it just.

Let us now resume our narrative from the date of the tournament; soon after which King Edward died, and Sir John Stanley, in the first year of his successor, Richard II, was honoured by him with a commission to Ireland, for the purpose of assisting in the total reduction of that unfortunate kingdom. By his great prudence and success he brought under submission the great rebel chiefs, to wit, O'Neal, King of Ulster; Rotherick O'Connor, King of Connaught; O'Caral, King of Uriel; O'Rurick, King of Meath; Arthur M'Kier, King of Leinster; and O'Brien, King of Thomond. In the year 1379, Richard coming in person to Ireland, these chieftains did homage to him as their sovereign prince. For his great and eminent services on this occasion Sir John had granted to him, by patent for life, the manor and lands of Black Castle in that country.

Ten years did Sir John sojourn, by the king's order, in this unquiet and troublesome appendage to the English crown. And it may be conceived that if true love had any hold on his affections, they were oft

communing with Isabella, forsaken, as she then thought, by him whom she had once too surely trusted. In the tumult of war, and in the administration of his high office, no doubt her gentle form would visit his spirit, and, like the star of future promise, guide him on to his achievements.

About the year 1390, when the return of Henry Duke of Lancaster from his banishment, without leave of the king, had caused a sore dismay throughout the land, Richard, harassed with the apprehension of danger, appointed Sir John Stanley Lord Justice of Ireland for six years. He was now able, in some measure, to confer a sufficient dignity on his beloved, though not yet equal, in point of wealth, to the wishes of Sir Thomas. But feeling desirous to know the state of her disposition towards him, he set out in disguise for Lathom, where as we have before stated, he so far prevailed that she became Lady Stanley in spite of all the opposition she had endured. Aware of the determination of her father, he deemed her love a sufficient recompense, thus fully refuting the insinuations that her dower had more charm for him than her person.

Returning to Ireland with his lady, they lived there happily for some years.

When Henry of Lancaster was crowned by the title of Henry the Fourth, Sir John being still Lord Justice of Ireland, and holding the government there in favour of the deposed king, the new monarch, well knowing the knight's power, together with his skill and experience as well in the senate as in the field, found means to attach him to the reigning interest, and, as a mark of signal favour, granted to him and his heirs for ever, by letters patent, many lands there named, lying in the westerly part of the county of Chester. Soon afterwards occurred that memorable rebellion, when the Welsh blood, boiling to a ferment by the hot appliances of one, Owen Glendower, an esquire of Wales, and in his youth a resident at the Inns of Court in London, kindled the

flames of intestine war. After he had conspired with the Percies and their adherents, together with a large body of the Scotch, these malcontents threatened to overthrow the now tottering dominion of King Henry.

The most prompt measures were, however, taken to meet this exigency—and Sir John Stanley was suddenly called out of Ireland; Sir William Stanley, then Lord of Stanley and Stourton, being appointed his deputy. Sir John soon applied himself in such earnest to the service of the king, his master, that a large and a powerful army, headed by Henry himself, together with "Prince Harry," his son, marched against the rebels. Near to Shrewsbury the latter were overthrown; Sir John, by his great bravery and address, mainly contributing to the success of the engagement. His presence was now become of essential service to the king, who in consequence appointed his second son, the Duke of Clarence—who claimed the title of Earl of Ulster in right of his wife—Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in his stead, the new governor landing at Carlingford on the 2nd August 1405.

Sir John obtained, as a favour granted but to few, and those of the highest rank, licence from the king to fortify a spacious house he was then building at Liverpool, the site whereof was given by Sir Thomas Lathom, who, we may now suppose, had in some measure swerved from his most unjust purpose, possibly on apprehending the great honours and influence that Sir John had already acquired without his aid or furtherance. This plot of land, it was said, contained 650 square yards, which he held together with several burgage houses and lands in that town.

He had full licence to build a castle or house of strength, embattled and machicolated, with *tenellare* or loop-holes in the walls, and other warlike devices, which no subject could undertake without special leave from the king.

The Isle of Man was at this time, by Northumberland's

rebellion, forfeit to the crown. Sir John the same year obtained a grant of it for life, and in the year following a regrant to himself and his heirs for ever, with the style and title of " King of Man."

It were needless to enumerate all the honours and distinctions heaped in such unwonted profusion upon our illustrious hero. It has rarely happened that so rapid a career has met with no reverse, for the fickle goddess mostly exalts her votaries only to make their downfall the more terrible.

Henry dying in 1413, was succeeded by his son Henry V., with whom Sir John was held in equal esteem, being again appointed to the government of Ireland; but, landing in Dublin, his health was now visibly on the wane. Four months afterwards he died at Ardee, to the great grief of his family, and the irreparable loss of the nation. He was a rare instance wherein a courtier, through four successive reigns, carried himself unimpeached, and unsullied by the political vices which were then too general to excite reproach. He was truly a knight " *sans peur et sans reproche.*"

He left two sons, John and Thomas, and one daughter, whose fortunes, at this time, we shall not attempt to follow.

Lady Stanley, his widow, returned to Liverpool with her children, and lived there until her death, in the house built by her husband.

Now did the beam of Sir Oskatell's favour, like an April day, suddenly change its gaudy and suspicious brightness. Sir Thomas, waning in years and ready to depart, began to consider his former misdoings. His daughter and her offspring were, by the laws of nature, justly entitled to his possessions, which he, reflecting on the great impiety and injustice of withholding, bequeathed, with some exceptions, to Lady Stanley and her heirs, revealing at the same time the fraud which he had practised, and extinguishing for ever the hopes and expectations of Sir Oskatell. Yet

was he not left entirely destitute: to him and to his descendants were reserved, by due process of law, the manors of Irlam and Urmston, near Manchester, with divers other valuable inheritances. At the same time was given to him the signet of his arms, with the crest assumed for his sake, *an eagle regardant, proper*. It was only subsequent to the supplanting of Sir Oskatell that his rivals took the present crest, "*The Eagle and Child*," where the eagle is represented as having secured his prey, in token of their triumph over the foundling, whom he is preparing to devour. This crest, with the motto "SANS CHANGER," the descendants of Sir John Stanley, the present Earl of Derby, continue to hold: the foregoing narrative showing faithfully the origin of that singular device.

THE BLACK KNIGHT OF ASHTON

" O Jesu ! for Thy mercies' sake,
And for Thy bitter passion,
Save us from the axe of the Tower,
And from Sir Ralph of Assheton ! "

It would be a curious inquiry to trace the origin of services and other customs, paid by tenants to their feudal sovereign. Connected as the subject is with the following tradition, it may be worth while if we attempt to throw together a few notices on that head. A rose was not a very unfrequent acknowledgment. Near to the scene of our story, the tenant of a certain farm called Lime Hurst was compelled to bring a rose at the feast of St. John Baptist. He held other lands ; but they were subject only to the customary rules of the lordship, such as ploughing, harrowing, carting turves from Ashton-moss to the lord's house, leading his corn in harvest, &c. This species of service was called boon-work ; and hence the old adage, " I am served like a boon-shearer." It, however, seems that some trifling present was made in return. In a MS. of receipts and disbursements belonging to the Cheethams, kept in the time of Charles II., there is an item for moneys paid for gloves to the boon-shearers at Clayton Hall, where Humphrey Cheetham, founder of the college at Manchester, then resided. The acknowledgment of a rose before mentioned might seem to have some allusion to the Knights Hospitallers. The estate of Lime Hurst was called John of Jerusalem's land, and the tithes and rent, in all probability, once went to the support of that order.

In the Ashton pedigree we find a Nicholas Assheton, as it was then spelt, who enrolled himself amongst these warrior-monks. It seems not improbable that the profits of this estate belonged to him.

The custom of heriotship, however, was the most oppressive, being paid and exacted from the parties at a time when they were least able to render it. Our tradition will best illustrate this remnant of barbarism, to which, even in the customs of the most savage tribes, we should scarcely find a parallel.

In the early records of the Ashton family we find that Thomas Stavely, or Stayley, held a place called the Bestal by paying one penny at Christmas. This Bestal was, perhaps, a place of security or confinement. Adjoining the hall yard, the ancient residence of the Ashtons, is an old stone building facing the south, now called the Dungeon. It is flanked at the east and west corners by small towers with conical stone roofs. The wall is pierced by two pointed windows. Judging from its appearance, it must have been a place of strength; the name Bestal being probably a corruption of Bastile, basilion, or bastilion—all of which we find appropriated to places of this description. Tradition, indeed, says the ancient lords of Ashton made this a place of confinement, when the power of life and death were at their command. A field near the old hall, still called Gallows Meadow, was then used as a place of execution.

Sir John Assheton, in the fifth year of Henry VI., became possessed of the Manor on payment of one penny annually. He is generally supposed to have founded the church about the year 1420. We find him assigning the forms or benches to his tenants: the names for whose uses they are appointed are all females. From this it may seem that seats in our churches were first put up for their convenience. Eighteen forms or benches are mentioned for the occupation of one hundred wives and widows, who are named, besides their daughters and servant wenches. Their husbands had not this privilege, being forced to stand or kneel in the aisles, as the service required. In the windows there yet remains a considerable quantity of painted glass, but very much mutilated. Three or four figures on the north side represent a king, saints, etc. In the chancel are the coats and effigies of the Asshetons in armour, kneeling. In one part seems to have been portrayed the invention of the Holy Cross by St. Helen. At whatever period the

church was built, the steeple must either have been erected afterwards, or have undergone a considerable repair in the time of the last Sir Thomas Assheton; for upon the south side are the arms of Ashton impaling Stayley. There is a tradition, that while the workmen were one day amusing themselves at cards, a female unexpectedly presented herself. She asked them to turn up an ace, promising, in case of compliance, that she would build several yards of the steeple; upon which they fortunately turned up the ace of spades. This tale may owe its origin to the following circumstances:—Upon the marriage of Sir Thomas Assheton with the daughter of Ralph Stayley, a considerable accumulation of property was the consequence. This might induce him to repair the church, and perform sundry other acts of charity and beneficence. Whilst the work was going on, Lady Elizabeth Assheton, it is not improbable, surprised the builders at their pastime; and giving a broad hint that a part of her money was being employed in the erection, might desire that her arms should be fixed in the steeple, impaled with those of her husband. The shape of an escutcheon, having a considerable resemblance to a spade ace, in all likelihood was the origin of the fable.

Sir John Assheton, the founder of the church, is the reputed father of Ralph, whom the following tradition commemorates. The origin of "*Riding the Black Lad*," is involved in great obscurity—some ascribing it to the tyranny of Sir Ralph, and others to the following circumstance, which may have been fabricated merely to throw off the odium attached to his name:—In the reign of Edward III., one Thomas Assheton fought under Queen Philippa in the battle of Neville's Cross. Riding through the ranks of the enemy, he bore away the royal standard from the Scotch King's tent, who himself was afterwards taken prisoner. King Edward, on his return from France, conferred on Thomas the honour of knighthood, with the title of Sir Thomas Assheton of Ashton-under-Line. To commemorate this singular display of valour, he instituted the custom of "Riding the Black Lad" upon Easter Monday at Asnton; leaving the sum of ten shillings yearly to support it, together with his own suit of black

velvet and a coat of mail. Which of these accounts is correct we cannot presume to determine. There is, however, sufficient testimony upon record to account for the dislike entertained towards the memory of Sir Ralph Assheton.

In the town of Ashton-under-Line, or Lime, called in the ancient rent-rolls Ashton-sub-Lima, a singular custom prevails. On Easter Monday in every year, the ceremony of " Riding the Black Lad " takes place. According to some, it is a popular expression of abhorrence towards the memory of Sir Ralph Assheton, commonly called *The Black Knight*, whose character and conduct would seem to warrant the odium thus attached to his name. The following is a brief account of the ceremony: An effigy is made of a man in black armour, and this image is deridingly emblazoned with some emblem of the occupation of the first couple that are married in the course of the year. The Black Boy is then fixed on horseback, and after being led in procession round the town, is dismounted, made to supply the place of a shooting-butt, and, all sorts of fire-arms being in requisition for the occasion, he is put to an ignominious death. Five shillings per annum are reserved from some neighbouring estate for the perpetuation of this absurd custom.

Sir Ralph Assheton was sheriff of York in the reign of Edward IV, and knight marshal and lieutenant of the Tower under Richard III, being in great esteem with the latter monarch. In the Harleian MSS. annuities are mentioned as being granted to him, with divers lordships, and a tun of wine yearly. So powerful was his jurisdiction, that a grant was made him to the effect, that if in cases of emergency suitable persons could not be procured for the trial of delinquents, his own authority should be a sufficient warrant for the purpose. Hence, from the nature of his office, and the powers that were entrusted to him by the king, and probably too from the natural bent of his disposition,

arose the popular dislike which vented itself in the well-known traditionary distich we have taken as our motto.

In those days, when the gentry went little from home, set times of mirth and recreation were constantly observed in their spacious and hospitable mansions. Yule, or Christmas, was a feast of especial note and observance. The great hall was mostly the scene of these boisterous festivities; where, from the gallery, the lord of the mansion and his family might witness the sports, without being incommoded by the uncouth and rustic manners of their guests. It was the custom to invite all who were in any way dependent on the proprietor, and who owed him suit and service.

The mansion of Sir Ralph had, like those of the neighbouring gentry, its lofty and capacious hall. At one end was a gallery resting on the heads of three or four gigantic figures carved in oak, perhaps originally intended as rude representations of the ancient Caryatides.

The Christmas but one following the elevation of Richard to the throne, in the year of our redemption 1483, was a season of unusual severity. Many tenants of Sir Ralph were prevented from assembling at the Yule feast. A storm had rendered the roads almost impassable, keeping most of the aged and infirm from sharing in this glorious pastime.

The Yule-log was larger than ever, and the blaze kept continually on the roar. No ordinary scale of consumption could withstand the attacks of the enemy, and thaw the icicles from his beard.

The wassail-bowl had gone freely about, and the company—Hobbe Adamson, Hobbe of the Leghes, William the Arrowsmith, Jack the Woodman, Jack the Hind, John the Slater, Roger the Baxter, with many others, together with divers widows of those who owed service to their lord, clad in their holiday costume—black hoods and brown jackets and petticoats —were all intent upon their pastimes, well charged with

fun and frolic. Their mirth was, however, generally kept within the bounds of decency and moderation by a personage of great importance, called the Lord of Misrule, who, though not intolerant of a few coarse and practical jokes upon occasion, was yet, in some measure, bound to preserve order and decorum on pain of being degraded from his office. To punish the refractory, a pair of stone hand-stocks was commonly used, having digit-holes for every size, from the paws of the ploughman to the taper fingers of my lady's maiden. This instrument was in the especial keeping of the dread marshal of these festivities.

The custom of heriotship, or a fine payable on the death of the landholder to the feudal lord, was then in most cases rigorously exacted. This claim fell with great severity upon widows in poor circumstances, who were, in too many instances, thus deprived of their only means of subsistence. Then came fees and fines to the holy Church, so that the bereaved and disconsolate creature had need to wish herself in the dark dwelling beside her husband. Sir David Lindsay may not be unaptly quoted in illustration of this subject. His poem called " The Monarch " contains the following frightful picture of the exactions and enormities committed on these defenceless and unoffending victims of their rapacity :

" And also the vicar, as I trow,
Will not fail to take a cow,
And uppermost cloths, though babes them an,
From a poor seely husbandman,
When he lyes ready to dy,
Having small children two or three,
And his three kine withouten mo,—
The vicar must have one of tho,
With the gray cloke that covers the bed,
Howbeit that they be poorly cled ;
And if the wife die on the morn,
And all the babes should be forlorn,

The other cow he takes away,
With her poor cote and petycote gray :
And if within two days or three
The eldest child shall happen to dy,
Of the third cow shall he be sure,
When he hath under his cure ;
And father and mother both dead be,
Beg must the babes without remedy.
They hold the corse at the church style
And thare it must remain awhile,
Till they get sufficient surety
For the church right and duty.
Then comes the landlord perforce,
And takes to him the fattest horse ;
Poor labourers would that law were down,
Which never was founded by reason.
I heard them say, under confession,
That this law was brother to oppression."

As it drew on towards eventide, the mirth increased. The rude legendary ballads of Sir Lancelot of the Lake, Beavois of Southampton, Robin Hood, The Pindar of Wakefield, and the Friar of Fountain's Abbey, Clim of the Clough, Ranulph of Chester, his Exploits in the Holy Land, together with the wondrous deeds of war and love performed by Sir Roger of Calverly, had been sung and recited to strange and uncouth music. Carols, too, were chanted between whiles in a most unreverend fashion. A huge Christmas pie, made in the shape of a cratch or cradle, was placed on the board. This being accounted a great test of orthodoxy, everyone was obliged to eat a slice, lest he should be suspected of favouring the heretical tenets then spreading widely throughout the land. Blindman's-buff and hot-cockles had each their turn ; but the sport that seemed to afford the most merriment was a pendulous stick having an apple at one end, and on the other a lighted candle, so that the unfortunate and liquorish wight who bit at this tempting bait generally burnt his nose on the

rebound, as the stick bounced to and fro on its pivot. The hall was now cleared for the masks. In this play the Black Knight himself generally joined, laughing heartily at and hurrying on the mishaps of the revellers. Many horrible and grotesque-looking shapes and disguises soon made their appearance; but one, more especially than the rest, excited no slight degree of distress and alarm. His antics proved a continual source of annoyance to the rest of the company. He singed Will the Arrowsmith's beard, poured a whole flagon of hot liquor in the wide hosen of Hobbe Adamson; but the enactor of St. George in a more especial manner attracted his notice; he crept between his legs, and bore him right into the middle of the pigsty, before he could be stayed; from whence the heroic champion of England issued, sorely shent with the admixtures and impurities of the place.

This termagant was a little broad-set figure wearing a mask, intended as a representation of his Satanic majesty, adorned with a huge pair of horns. From it hung a black cloak or shirt, out of which protruded a goodly and substantial tail. No one could discover this ruthless disturber of their sports. Every attempt was unavailing; he shot through their fingers as though they had been greased, and a loud and contumelious laugh was the only reward of their exertions.

In the end, a shrewd conjecture went abroad that he was none other than some malicious imp of darkness let loose upon their frolics, to disquiet and perplex their commemoration of the Blessed Nativity. Yet was it an unusual occurrence upon Yule night, when these disturbers were supposed to be prevented from walking the earth, being confined for a space to their own kingdom. But the desperate character of their lord, who was thought to fear neither man nor devil, might in some sort account for this unwelcome intrusion.

The guests grew cautious. Whispers and unquiet looks went round, while the little devil would ever and

anon frisk about, to the great detriment and dismay of his companions.

Their lord's presence was anxiously looked for. The ruddy glow of their mirth had become dim. Sir Ralph, they hoped, would either unmask this mischievous intruder, or eject him from the premises; he having the credit of being able to master aught in the shape of either mortal or immortal intelligences.

At length he came, clad in his usual suit of black velvet. A swarthy and ill-favoured wight he was, with a beard, as the story goes, that would have swept off the prickly gorse-bush in its progress. He was received with a great show of humility, and all made their best obeisance. But this deputy, representative, or vicegerent of "Old Hornie," he stood erect, among the obsequious guests, in a posture not at all either respectful or becoming.

"Now, knaves, to your sport. Ye be as doleful as a pack of pedlars with a full basket after the fair. I'll make ye play, and be merry, too; or, e' lady, ye shall taste of the mittens. Dan, give these grim-faced varlets a twinge of the gloves there just to make 'em laugh."

His tyrannous and overbearing temper would even make them merry by compulsion. But the terrified hearers did not manifest that intense feeling of gratification which this threat was intended to produce. Each looked on the face of his neighbour, hoping to find there some indication of the felicity which his own had failed to exhibit.

The countenance of their chief grew more dark and portentous. Just as they were expecting the full burst of his fury, up trotted the merry imp, and irreverently crept behind Sir Ralph. Before their almost incredulous eyes did he lay hold on the tail of the knight's cloak, and twisting it round his arm, by a sudden jerk he brought this dignified personage backwards upon the floor. The oaken beams trembled

at this unlooked-for invasion of their repose. Deep, deadly, and abominable curses rang through the hall. Livid and ghastly by turns, the knight's features wore that ludicrous expression of rage and astonishment more easy to conceive than to portray. Volleys of oaths and inarticulate sounds burst out from his wrath, almost too big for utterance. When reinstated in that posture which is the distinctive characteristic of man, he did not attempt to administer his vindictive retribution by proxy. Laying hold on a tough cudgel, he gave it one ominous swing, describing an arc of sufficient magnitude to have laid an army prostrate. He then pursued the luckless emissary of the Evil One, roaring and foaming with this unusual exertion. There was now no lack of activity. A hawk among the chickens, or a fox in a farm-yard, were nothing to it. Sometimes was seen the doughty Sir Ralph driving the whole herd before him like a flock of sheep ; but the original cause of the mischief generally contrived to mingle with the rabble rout, who in vain attempted to rid themselves of his company. The knight was not over-nice in the just administration of his discipline. Often, when he thought himself near enough for its accomplishment, he aimed a terrific blow, but shot wide of the mark, bringing down the innocent and unoffending victims, who strewed the floor like swaths behind the mower. Whenever a lucky individual could disentangle himself from his comrades, he darted through the door, and in spite of the storm and pitchy darkness without, thought himself too happy in escaping with a few holes in his skin. Yet he of the horns and tail, by some chance or another, always passed unhurt —a hideous laugh accompanying the adroit contrivances by which he eluded the cudgel.

The hall was now but scantily supplied with guests ; the runaways and wounded having diminished the numbers to some half-score. A parley was now sounded by the victorious and pursuing enemy.

"Hold, ye lubberly rascals! Ye scum—ye recrement—why do ye run?" said the knight, puffing with great vigour. "I say, why run ye!" brandishing his club. "Bring hither that limb of Satan, and ye shall depart every one to his home. Lay hold of him, I tell ye, and begone."

But these terms of capitulation were by no means so easy to accept as the proposer imagined.

The first mover of the mischief had gotten himself perched on a projecting ledge by the gallery, from whence they were either unable or unwilling to dislodge him.

"How!" said the knight. "Ye are afraid, cowards, I trow. Now will I have at thee, for once. I'll spoil thy capering!" This threat was followed by a blow aimed at the devoted representative from the infernal court; but it failed to dismount him, for he merely shrunk aside, and it was rendered harmless. Another and a more contumelious laugh announced this failure. Even the Black Knight grew alarmed. The being was surely invulnerable. He stayed a moment ere he repeated the attack, when, to his unspeakable horror and astonishment, there issued a thin squeaking voice from underneath the disguise.

"The heriot, Sir Ralph—the heriot! We'll have a heriot at Easter!"

Had a thunderbolt fallen at his feet, the knight could not have been more terrified. He let the weapon fall. His hands dropped powerless at his side. His countenance was like the darkly rolling sea, strangely tossed by some invisible tempest. The cause of this sudden and unexpected termination of the assault we will now proceed briefly to unfold.

The morning of this day, being the eve of the Blessed Nativity, had been employed by the Black Knight in the laudable occupation of visiting a poor widow; who, though recently bereaved of her husband, had not rendered the customary heriot. Unfortunately, the only valuable she possessed was a cow, the produce of

which formed the chief support of the family; four young children, and a boy of about fourteen, whose brains were generally supposed more or less oddly constructed than those of his neighbours, depended on this supply for their daily support. Cold, bitter cold, was the season, and it had set in with more than common severity. Day after day the payment was delayed. Every morning the widow and her son fondled the poor beast, as though it were the last; but another morning and evening succeeded. Supper could not supply the place of breakfast, nor breakfast contend against the wants of supper; and how could the already half-famished ones be sustained, when their only resource should be taken away?

"Go down upon your knees, Will, and thank God for another morning's meal. It is the eve of our blessed Lord's incarnation, and I think He will not leave us to perish in this world, who has made such a bountiful provision for our well-being in the next. The knight has not sent for the heriot, and I think that He alone who succours the widow and the fatherless can have inclined his heart to mercy."

Scarcely were the thanksgivings finished, when they were alarmed by the rapid approach of their persecutor. The door flew open, and in thundering accents the Black Knight himself came to make his demand.

"I'll have thee to the dungeon, hag, for lack of service. How comes it to pass the heriot is not paid?"

The widow made no reply. Her heart was full.

"See to it," continued the pitiless churl; "for if thy quittance be not forthcoming, and that in haste, I'll turn thee and thy brats into the moor-dikes, where ye may live upon turf and ditchwater if it so please ye."

"Oh, ha' pity!" But the widow's prayer was vain. The Black Knight was never known to hearken either to pity or persuasion.

"Thy cow—thy cow! This night let it be rendered.

Sir Ralph Assheton never uttered a threat that fell to the ground."

"Mother," said the boy, "is this Sir Ralph, our liege lord?"

"Aye, fool," angrily replied the knight. "And what may thy wits gather by the asking?"

"And will *he* ever die, Mother?"

"Hush, Willy," said the terrified woman.

"Nay," returned the leering half-wit, "I was but a-thinking, that if he does, maybe *his* master, too, will want a heriot."

"And what may be the name of my master?" said Sir Ralph, with a furious oath.

"The devil," replied the boy, with apparent unconcern.

"Aye—and what will they give him, dost think?"

"*Thee!*"

Whether the peculiar expression of the lad's face, or the fearless indifference of his address, so unusual to that of the crouching slaves he generally met with, contributed to the result, we know not; but, instead of correcting the boy for his audacity, he hastily departed, finally repeating his threat of punishment in case of disobedience.

When Sir Ralph got home, his ill-humour vented itself with more severity than usual. On joining the sports, he was at the first somewhat startled, on perceiving a representation of the personage which the morning's conversation had by no means prepared him to recognize either with admiration or respect. Still, as it was nothing out of the common usage, he took no apparent notice, farther than by remarking the general gloom that prevailed, contrary to the usual course of these festivities. Then came the unlooked-for aggression upon his person, provoking his already irritated feelings into vehement action. But, when the last unfortunate blow had failed in its purpose, appearing to the furious knight to have been warded off by a charm, a sudden

misgiving came across him, which, with the speech of this supposed imp of darkness, so strangely alluding to his adventure with the boy, wrought powerfully upon his now excited imagination, so that he stood aghast, unable to grapple with its terrors. He hastily departed from the hall, leaving the enemy in undisputed possession of the field.

What occurred subsequently we are not told, save that on the following morning the widow's heriot was sent back, with an ungracious message from the knight, showing his unwillingness to restore what terror only had wrung from him.

The person who adventured this dangerous personification of the Evil One was never known. Whether some bold and benevolent individual, interposing on behalf of the fatherless and famishing little ones, or some being of a less substantial nature—whether one of those immortal intelligences of a middle order between earth and heaven, who at that time were supposed to take pleasure in tormenting the vicious and unworthy—is more than our limited capacities can disclose.

It is said that on Easter Monday following the Black Knight died ; and though probably it had no connection with the circumstances we have related, yet was his decease a sufficiently strange event in the mysterious chapter of coincidences to warrant this memorial.

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FAIR ELLEN OF RADCLIFFE

In Percy's Relics, this ballad is called " The Lady Isabella's Tragedy," and is thus introduced :—

" This ballad is given from an old black-letter copy in the Pepys Collection, collated with another in the British Museum, H. 263, folio. It is there entitled, ' The Lady Isabella's Tragedy, or the Step-Mother's Cruelty ; being a relation of a lamentable and cruel murther, committed on the body of the Lady Isabella, the only daughter to a noble Duke, etc. To the tune of " The Lady's Fall." ' To some copies are annexed eight more modern stanzas, entitled, ' The Duchess ' and Cook's Lamentation."

Dr. Whitaker says, " The remains of Radcliffe Tower prove it to have been a manor-house of the first rank. It has been quadrangular ; but two sides only remain." A licence to kernel and embattle shows the date of its erection, or rather rebuilding, to be in the fourth year of Henry IV., by James Radcliffe, who, we find by the pedigree, was the eldest son of William Radcliffe. He married Joan, daughter to Sir John Tempest of Bracewell, in the county of York.

" The noble old hall is forty-three feet two inches in length, and in one part twenty-six feet, in another twenty-eight feet in width. The two massy principals which support the roof are the most curious specimens of ancient wood-work I have ever seen. The broadest piece of timber is two feet seven inches by ten inches. A wall-plate on the outside of one beam, from end to end, measures two feet by ten inches. The walls are finished at the square with a moulded cornice of oak. At the bottom of the room is a door opening into one of the towers, the lower part of which only remains, of massy grout-work, and with three arches, each furnished with a funnel or aperture

RATCLIFFE TOWER.

like a chimney. On the left side of the hall are the remains of a very curious window-frame of oak, wrought in Gothic tracery, but square at top. Near the top of the hall, on the right, are the remains of a doorway, opening into what was once a staircase, and leading to a large chamber above the kitchen, the approach to which was by a door of massy oak, pointed at the top.

"Over the high tables of ancient halls (as is the case in some college halls at present) it was common to have a small aperture, through which the lord or master could inspect, unseen, what was going on below. But in this situation at Radcliffe is a ramified window of oaken work, opening from the apartment above mentioned, but now closed up. This consists of eight arches, with trefoil-pointed tops, four and four, with two narrower apertures above.

"To this place and family are attached the tradition and ballad given by Dr. Percy, under the name of Isabella, but here applied to a Lord Thomas and faire Ellenor, father and daughter, whose figures are supposed to be graven on a slab in the church, where the common people, concluding, I suppose, from its whiteness, that it was meant as an emblem of the innocence it is said to cover, have mutilated by breaking off small fragments, as amulets for the prevention or cure of disorders. Traditions, always erroneous in their circumstances, are yet rarely devoid of foundation; and though the pedigrees of Radcliffe exhibit no failure of the family by the premature death of an heiress; though the last Richard de Radcliffe, who had daughters only, certainly did not make 'a scullion-boy the heir of all his land,' when he settled it on Radcliffe Baron Fitzwalter; though the blood actually pointed out on the kitchen floor, where this Thyestæan banquet is said to have been prepared, deserves no more regard than many other stories and appearances of the same kind; yet we are not to discard as incredible the tradition of a barbarous age, merely because it asserts the sacrifice of a young and beautiful heiress to the jealousy or the avarice of a step-mother. When this is granted, the story of the pie with all its horrors may safely be ascribed to the inventive genius of a minstrel. On the whole, Radcliffe is a place

which, not only from its antiquity and splendour, but from the great families which have branched out from it, and the romantic tradition attached to it, can scarcely be surveyed without enthusiasm, or quitted without regret."

There is a story of its being haunted by a black dog ; but as this apparition has never been seen by two persons in company, it may safely be ascribed to the genius of fear, quite as creative a power as any other faculty of the imagination.

We have thought it best to give the ballad entire, without any embellishments of our own. Though not in the best style of these metrical romances, it is still of sufficient interest, from its connection, to claim a place in the " Traditions " of the county.

THERE was a lord of worthy fame,
And a hunting he would ride,
Attended by a noble traine
Of gentrye by his side.

And while he did in chase remaine,
To see both sport and playe,
His ladye went, as she did feigne,
Unto the church to praye.

This lord he had a daughter deare,
Whose beauty shone so bright,
She was beloved both far and neare
Of many a lord and knight.

Fair Ellen was this damsel call'd,
A creature faire was she ;
She was her father's only joye,
As you shall after see.

Therefore her cruel stepmother
Did envye her so much,
That daye by daye she sought her life,
Her malice it was such.

She bargain'd with the master-cook,
To take her life awaye ;
And, taking of her daughter's book,
She thus to her did saye :

Go home, sweet daughter, I thee praye,
Go hasten presentlie ;
And tell unto the master-cook
These wordes that I tell thee :

And bid him dresse to dinner streight
That fair and milk-white doe,
That in the parke doth shine so bright
There's none so faire to showe.

This ladye, fearing of no harme,
Obey'd her mother's will ;
And presentlye she hasted home,
Her pleasure to fulfil.

She streight into the kitchen went,
Her message for to tell ;
And there she spied the master-cook,
Who did with malice swell.

Now, master-cook, it must be soe,
Do that which I thee tell :
You needes must dresse the milke-white doe
Which you do knowe full well.

Then streight his cruell bloodye hands
He on the ladye layd,
Who quivering and shaking stands,
While thus to her he sayd :—

Thou art the doe that I must dresse,
See here, behold my knife ;
For it is pointed, presentlye
To ridd thee of thy life.

Oh then, cried out the scullion-boye,
As loud as loud might bee,
Oh, save her life, good master-cook,
And make your pyes of mee !

For pitye's sake, do not destroye
My ladye with your knife ;
You know shee is her father's joye,
For Christe's sake, save her life.

I will not save her life, he sayd,
Nor make my pyes of thee :
Yet, if thou dost this deed bewraye,
Thy butcher I will bee.

Now when his lord he did come home
For to sit downe and eat,
He called for his daughter deare
To come and carve his meat.

Now sit you downe, his ladye say'd,
Oh, sit you down to meat ;
Into some nunnery she is gone,
Your daughter deare forget.

Then solemnlye he made a vowe
Before the companie,
That he would neither eat nor drinke
Until he did her see.

Oh, then bespake the scullion-boye,
With a loud voice so hye—
If now you will your daughter see,
My lord, cut up that pye :

Wherein her flesh is minced small,
And parched with the fire ;
All caused by her stepmother,
Who did her death desire.

And cursed bee the master-cook,
Oh, cursed may he bee!
I proffer'd him my own heart's blood,
From death to set her free.

Then all in blacke this lord did mourne,
And, for his daughter's sake,
He judged her cruell stepmother
To be burnt at a stake.

Likewise he judged the master-cook
In boiling lead to stand;
And made the simple scullion-boye
The heire of all his land.

THE ABBOT OF WHALLEY

" Earl Percy there his ancyent spred,
The half moone shining all soe faire ;
The Norton's ancyent had the crosse,
And the five wounds our Lord did beare."
The Rising in the North.

The Cistercian Abbey of Whalley was founded by Henry Lacy, Earl of Lincoln, who, having given the advowson of the parish to the abbey of Stanlaw in Cheshire, the monks procured an appropriation, and removed hither in 1296, increasing their number to sixty. The parish church is nearly coeval with the introduction of Christianity into the north of England. This foundation now became the nucleus of a flourishing establishment, " continuing," as Dr. Whitaker informs us, " for two centuries and a half, to exercise unbounded charity and hospitality ; to adorn the site thus chosen with a succession of magnificent buildings ; to protect the tenants of its ample domains in the enjoyment of independence and plenty ; to educate and provide for the children ; to employ, clothe, feed, and pay many labourers, herdsmen, and shepherds ; to exercise the arts and cultivate the learning of the times ; yet unfortunately at the expense of the secular incumbents, whose endowments they had swallowed up, and whose functions they had degraded into those of pensionary vicars or mendicant chaplains."

The ruins of Whalley Abbey are situated in a beautifully-sequestered spot on the banks of the Calder, presenting some of the most extensive and picturesque remains of antiquity in the county ; and the site sufficiently exemplifies that peculiar instinct, if it may be so called, which guided the monks in their choice of situations. " Though the Cistercians affected to plant themselves in the solitude of woods, which were to be gradually essarted by the labour

of their own hands, and though they obtained an exemption from the payment of tithes on that specific plea, yet they were excellent judges of the quality of land, however concealed, and never set about their laborious task without the assurance of an ample recompense."

The following minute account of these ruins is from the pen of the historian of Whalley :—" A copious stream to the south, a moderate expanse of rich meadow and pasture around, and an amphitheatre of sheltering hills, clad in the verdant covering of their native woods, beyond ; these were features in the face of Nature which the earlier Cistercians courted with instinctive fondness. Where these combined, it does not appear that they ever abandoned a situation which they had once chosen ; and where these were wanting, it is certain they never long or willingly remained.

" We now proceed to a particular survey of the remains of Whalley Abbey as they exist at present. First, then, the whole area of the close, containing thirty-six acres, three roods, fourteen poles, is still defined by the remains of a broad and deep trench, which surrounded it ; over this were two approaches to the house, through two strong and stately gateways yet remaining. They are constructed in that plain and substantial style which characterized the Cistercian houses ; a style which approximates to that of fortification, and shows that the monks did not obtain a licence to kernel and embattle without an end in view. Within this area, and on the verge of the Calder, which formed the south-west boundary of the close, was the house itself, consisting of three quadrangles, besides stables and offices. The first and most westerly of these was the cloister-court, of which the nave of the conventual church formed the north side ; the chapter-house and vestry, yet remaining, the east ; the dormitory, also remaining, the west ; and the refectory and kitchens the south. The cloister was of wood, supported, as usual, upon corbels, still remaining ; the area within was the monks' cemetery, and some of the ancient gravestones here are still remembered. Against the wall, on the south side of this quadrangle, is a wide surbased arch, apparently of Henry the Seventh's time, which has evidently

contained the lavatory. The groove of the lead pipe which conveyed the water is still conspicuous, as is also another for the reception of a wooden rail, on which the towels hung. Beyond this court, to the east, is another quadrangle area, formed by the choir of the church, on one side, the opposite side of the chapter-house, etc., on another, a line of ruinous buildings on the third, and a large distinct building, itself surrounding a small quadrangle, on the fourth. This appears evidently to have been the abbot's lodgings; for which reason, as being best adapted to the habits of an ordinary family, it immediately became the residence of the Asshetons, and after many alterations, and a demolition of its best apartments, particularly a gallery nearly one hundred and fifty feet in length, has still several good and habitable rooms, and is now preserved with due care by its owner. The ancient kitchen, the *coquina abbatis* of the *compotus*, whence such hecatombs were served up, remains, though roofless, with two huge fire-places. On the southern side of this building is a small but very picturesque and beautiful ruin mantled with ivy, which appears to have been a chapel, and was probably the abbot's private oratory. But the conventual church itself, which exceeded many cathedrals in extent, has been levelled nearly to the foundation. The work of havoc was probably an effect of that general panic which seized the lay-owners of abbeys, on the attempt made by Queen Mary to restore the monks to their cloisters.—'For now,' says Fuller, 'the edifices of abbeys, which were still entire, looked lovingly again on their ancient owners; in prevention whereof, such as possessed them for the present plucked out their eyes by levelling them to the ground and shaving from them, as much as they could, all abbey characters.'

"However, in the month of August, 1798, permission having been obtained from the guardian of the present owner to investigate the foundation by digging, a very successful attempt was made to retrieve the whole ichnography of the church, of which there were no remains above the surface to assist conjecture, or to guide research, but one jamb of the west window against the wall of the dormitory, a small portion of the south wall of the nave, a

fragment of the south transept, and another jamb of one of the side chapels eastward from the last. An inequality in the ground, eastward from the transept, in an adjoining orchard, showed the half-pace into the choir, of which the outline to the north and east was also defined in the same manner. Upon these slender data we proceeded, first, to investigate the foundations of the columns towards the west end; and, having ascertained the distance of one from the south wall, the width of the south aisle, and consequently of the north, followed of course; another digging immediately to the north ascertained the width of the middle aisle, and a third, from east to west, gave one intercolumnation; the length of the nave being already given by the remains of the transept, the number of columns was now proved. A right line drawn along the remnant of the south wall, and continued to the intersection of the nave and transept, proved the length of the latter on the south side, and, consequently, also on the north. The choir evidently appeared to have consisted of a presbytery, with two side aisles, and four other chapels; two to the north, and as many to the south.

"The site of the choir being determined, it remained to investigate its contents beneath the surface: accordingly, under the high altar, nothing appeared but a bed of undisturbed and native sand; but beneath the second half-pace, immediately leading up to it, were turned up many broken remains of a painted pavement, consisting of small glazed floor-tiles, adorned with various devices, and of different forms and dimensions. At the foot of the stalls, a narrow rectilinear filleting of the same material had bounded the whole. On some was inscribed the word MARIE, in Longobardic characters.

"This pavement had been deeply bedded in mortar, but was altogether displaced, and turned down from one to three feet beneath the surface, where several skeletons were found very entire and in their original position, but without any remains of coffins, vestments, or other ornaments, as appeared upon a most minute investigation. These, however, were, beyond a doubt, the Abbots of Whalley. From the confused state of the original pave-

ment, the whole floor of the presbytery, from the foot of the stalls, appeared to have been successfully covered with grave-stones, all of which, however, had been removed, excepting fragments of two : one of these had a groove, once inlaid with a filleting of brass, and the other, beneath which lay the skeleton of a tall and robust man, had deeply cut upon it the stump of a tree reguled. This I conjecture to have been a thorn, intended as a rebus upon the name of Christopher Thornber, the fifteenth abbot, who died in 1486. In this search we narrowly missed the fragments of the gravestone of Abbot Lindley, which were casually turned up on this very spot, A.D. 1813. On one, in the Longobardic character of Edward the Third's time, were the letters IOꝑ and on the other AJ ꝑVIV.

" From these data, slender as they may seem, I arrive at my conclusion, thus :—First, None but abbots were interred in the high choir, secondly, the characters cannot be later than the latter end of Edward the Third, when the old English black letter was substituted in its place. From the foundation to this time three Johns had been Abbots of Whalley ; Belfield, Topeliffe, and Lindley. The termination of the surname must have immediately preceded the word *huius*, but the letters AJ can only have formed the termination of Lindelai, the old orthography of the word.

" The remains of the Lacies, wherever deposited, after their removal from Stanlaw, had undoubtedly been preserved with religious reverence, and enclosed in magnificent tombs. But in these researches there were no appearances which justified even a conjecture that we had discovered them."*

John Paslew, the last Abbot of Whalley, appears, by a reference to his arms, to have been of the Paslews of Wiswall. The first twenty years after his election were passed, like those of his predecessors, in the duties of his choir, in the exercise of hospitality, in attention to the extensive possessions of his house, or in the improvement of his buildings ; but a storm was approaching, before which either his conscience or his bigotry prevented him from bending, and which precipitated his ruin and that of the

* Whitaker's Hist. Whalley.

abbey. The religious houses in general were now greatly relaxed in discipline, and many of them dreadfully corrupted in morals. What was the state of Whalley must now be left to conjecture, though charity should incline us to think no evil to those against whom no specific evidence appears. The Pilgrimage of Grace was now commenced, and Paslew seems to have been pushed into the foremost ranks of the rebellion; when this expedition ended in the discomfiture and disgrace of its promoters, every art of submission and corruption was vainly employed to ward off the blow. Paslew was arraigned for high treason, tried, and condemned, and is supposed to have been interred in the north aisle of the parish church, under a stone yet remaining; the ignominious part of his sentence being remitted, out of respect to his order.

"The attainder of an abbot was understood, however rightly, by the crown lawyers of that time, to infer a forfeiture of the house; and accordingly, without the form of a surrender, the abbey of Whalley, with all its appurtenances, was instantly seized into the king's hands; and thus fell this ancient foundation.

"Fr. Thomas Holden, younger son of Gilbert Holden, of Holden, gent., was, in all probability, the last surviving monk. On the Dissolution he appears to have returned to his native place. In 1550 we meet with his name as Sir Thomas Holden, curate of Haslingden; and in 1574 he was licensed to the same cure at the metropolitical visitation of Archbishop Grindall, held at Preston, by the style of Thomas Holden, clerk of sober life, and competent learning. Strange as it may seem, we find the last surviving monk of Whalley a Protestant minister, thirty-seven years after its dissolution!"

It was in the dark month of November, when the brown leaves are fluttering on the ground, when the wind comes mournfully through the bare woods, and the hollow nooks and quiet caves respond with their mystic voice, that two travellers were seen loitering up the grand avenue that swept nobly through the western embattled gateway of Whalley Abbey. The foremost of them wore

a low-crowned cap, simply decorated with a heron's plume, and a doublet of mulberry-coloured velvet, puffed out capaciously at the shoulders. Trunk-hose of a goodly diameter, and wide-flapped boots, decorated the lower extremity of his person. On his left hand he bore a hooded falcon. The jesses were of crimson and yellow silk, its legs fancifully adorned with little bells fastened by rings of leather. These made a jingling and dissonant music as it flew, being generally tuned one semitone below another, that they might be the more sonorous considering their small size. The bearer wore a pair of stout leathern mittens, and he carried a long pole to aid him, as it might seem, in the chase. His manner bespoke him above the ordinary rank; and his garb, from the minute regulations then existing in regard to dress, showed at any rate his pretensions to nobility. This proud cavalier was followed by one servant only, who carried a capacious wallet, not over-well replenished with provision, as was apparent from its long lank shape and attenuated proportions. His master's cloak was slung on the other shoulder; and his belt displayed some implements that appeared alike formidable as means of offence or defence.

Eventide was then drawing on, but it did not appear that the falcon had been loosed to the game; the usual tokens of success were wanting—the torn and bloody carcases that marked an abundant sport. Two or three of the brethren were sitting on a bench in the gateway. In passing by, the foremost of the strangers hastily addressed his follower.

"Ralph Newcome, plague on thee! hast thou had a call again at the wallet? Thou guzzling tinder-throat, thy drouth is never slaked!"

Now Ralph, having felt sore oppressed with the weight of sundry leathern bottles, loaves, and wedges of cold meat, had taken especial care to lighten his back and load his stomach whenever the occasion was urgent. His endeavours had not been without success, for the

wallet, as we have seen, hung from his shoulders, long, narrow, and unfurnished, save with the scraps and relics of many a savoury junket.

"Coming, master," was the reply, sufficiently audible for his master's ear; the remainder escaped in a sort of grumble, the dregs of his ill humour at the interruption.

The sportsman, if such he was, gained a ready admittance into the abbey enclosure. Passing round the north transept of the church, he made the best of his way to the abbot's house, where Paslew dwelt in great state, keeping a separate establishment and a numerous train of domestics and officials.

Paslew was in some respects a man of parsimonious habits; and though his bounty might now be the better excused, yet in the more prosperous days of his dominion he had the character of a selfish and greedy priest, whose charity was less than that of his predecessor, and his personal expenses double.

Encouraged by the "Pilgrimage of Grace," as it was then called, headed by one Aske, a gentleman of but mean pretensions, who yet possessed the art of making himself popular with the vulgar, Paslew, though apparently taking no open part in the rebellion, had with his monks repossessed their ancient seat, from which they had been driven by the decrees of Henry VIII.

The rebel army had their camp at Doncaster, where the Archbishop of York and the Lord D'Arcy openly espoused their cause, receiving in great state a herald from the king's army, who came to negotiate with these dangerous malcontents. They had formed high notions of their own power and importance, and entertained sanguine hopes of success, especially since the Duke of Norfolk, a supporter of the ancient religion, was appointed to the command of the royal forces along with the Earl of Shrewsbury. The monks made themselves certain that the result would be a complete purification of heresy from the land, or at least that measures

would be adopted for the purpose of forcing Henry to a restitution of their rights. So fully established were they in this opinion, that, as we have just seen, some of them took possession of their ancient inheritances without the tedious formality of awaiting a fresh grant from the king.

The rebel army, being allured by Norfolk with vain promises of satisfaction, were now dispersed, though with the understanding that another assemblage should take place at a given notice, for which purpose beacons were erected at convenient distances throughout the north. By these means their forces could again be mustered with the greatest security and despatch.

Within this interval our narrative begins. Paslew had received some communication from the leaders of the pilgrimage ; but he seemed wishful to procrastinate, hoping, perhaps, he should be spared the necessity of any more direct treasonable demonstrations, by the timely submission of the king ; yet his aid was of too much importance to be neglected.

The stranger, on his introduction, was received with some ostentation, and not a little ceremony. They were evidently unknown to each other ; but the keen glance of the abbot instantly detected the signal for some secret message. Paslew was habited in the Cistercian gown, and scapulary of white cloth. His eye was dark, but restless ; his lips, drawn in, were narrow and compressed, showing the curbed impetuosity of his spirit. Either as a churchman or a warrior, he seemed fitted for daring enterprise ; yet was he of a wary and cautious bearing, a characteristic which his monkish education had in all probability thrown over his natural temperament. The attendants having departed, the stranger drew an unsealed letter from his bosom.

" A written message, my lord abbot, from the Abbot of Kirkstall. 'Tis now for your reverence's private regard, afterwards at your discretion." The abbot hastily glanced over this piece of quaint and formal

Latinity, occasionally darting a rapid and penetrating look at his visitor.

"He says not aught regarding so goodly a messenger," said Paslew carelessly.

"I should have marvelled if he had," returned the other with a contemptuous smile. "He knew not of so important a personage when that epistle was elaborated from his pen."

"How?" said the abbot, his features gathering into a portentous scowl.

"Nay, I beseech your reverence's grace, that you throw off all such disturbed apprehensions; for in troth a messenger of my bearing and capacity were worth a knight's ransom in these evil days, when the monks may not abroad with safety."

"Speak out. Remember I have yet the power to punish both insolence and treachery."

The abbot's lip curled upwards, pale and quivering with rage, not unmixed with apprehension.

"Grammercy," said the stranger, with a provokingly careless expression of cool and contemptuous defiance—"I cry you none—I am at present nameless. To work, to work, lord abbot. Thou hast holden back too long; and there is a shrewd suspicion abroad of thine integrity in the good cause. Hold!" said he, rising, as the reverend prelate was on the point of summoning his attendants; "I am not thy prisoner! Impotent, I would crook my finger thus, and thou shouldest crouch at my bidding. Nay, these be evil days, I say again; and more strange things may come to pass than bearding a lordly abbot in his den!"

Great was the astonishment of Paslew. The stranger stood proudly erect; his arms were folded, and a withering glance shot from beneath his brows. Even John Paslew, unused to a sense of inferiority before his fellow-men, felt cowed before him. For the first time, in all likelihood, he knew not how or what to answer. The stranger interrupted this painful silence.

"Since the monks are forbidden to be out a-gadding, the cowl and scapulary might have found some hindrance over the moors from Kirkstall. With my hawk and bearing-pole, I can follow on to the sport without let or question." The latter part of this speech seemed to throw some light on the purpose for which this messenger had been selected. Paslew was preparing for a further inquiry, when he was again interrupted.

"I tell thee, a courier of my condition may go free, though nameless. But to business—Norfolk is tampering with our credulity. He thinks to gain our time to his advantage: but the work must again be urged forward. Yet lack we thy aid. May we depend on its being faithfully rendered? We must have no lukewarm allies in the rear of our camp."

The stranger drew from beneath his inner vest a crucifix, with the representation of a chalice and of the five wounds of Christ.

Paslew kissed the token, and his suspicions were at rest. But still, there was a dubiety and hesitation in his manner displeasing to the stranger. He would bind himself to no distinct pledge respecting the time of his appearance at the rebel camp; and altogether seemed to display either cowardice or a want of cordiality. His guest refusing to stay the night, on a pretext of urgent business farther north, departed soon after the termination of their interview.

The night was fast closing when the strangers left the abbey. One by one the pale stars seemed to start out, as if just lighted up in the blue vault. The dark woods threw their giant arms around the sacred domain, as though to guard it against unhallowed intrusion. The travellers had gained the steep ascent towards the north-east, from whence the river, winding down the narrow valley, seemed as if here and there a spark was floating on its quiet surface—the lights, gliding on the opposite brink, fell distinct and unbroken upon the stream. The soft voice of the current grew strangely

WHALLEY ABBEY.

audible, in contrast with the deep silence; the wind rolling it round to the ear at intervals startling and abrupt.

Preceded by a guide, they had taken the rough mountain road, leading from the abbey into the forest of Pendle, the stranger and his servant still walking, or rather climbing, for their journey could only be accomplished on foot. Having proceeded about two miles on this rugged path, they diverged to the left, where the only indication to assist their guide was the turf-cutters' track and a few heaps of stones, scarcely distinguishable from the common mass, but by an eye accustomed to these land-marks. Carefully were they sought for at times, the blazing torch carried by their leader being often requisite for the search.

They now descended by a narrow and steep ravine, the termination of which brought them to a small brook. This they crossed, and again commenced a sharp and troublesome ascent. The mighty Pendle rose up before them, huge and dark, engrossing half the hemisphere. To this point, it seemed, their path was directed. The guide now trimmed his torch, the smoke from which had for some time been rather an accompaniment than an assistance to their toil, as it caused them to loiter at an inconvenient distance, thereby enhancing the difficulties they had to encounter. Slow and toilsome was their progress, yet a patient continuance in any path will sooner or later lead to the end. The brow of the hill seemed rapidly diminishing; the abrupt steep was at length gained, when the whole glorious garniture of the heavens, uninterrupted from that majestic height, was suddenly revealed. True, it was a November night, but unusually clear and vivid; the stars seemed to burn rather than shine, so piercing was their effulgence. The vast track of the Milky Way appeared to span the dark and level platform, like the bow of some triumphal arch. They seemed to stand on a huge circle, black, bare—its verge unapproach-

able, contrasting deeply with the encompassing splendour. Proceeding onwards, a dark speck was visible, springing out abruptly from the verge of the horizon. Its bulk rapidly increased, their path evidently tending in that direction. A shrill whistle from the guide was now answered by a corresponding signal. Presently they were challenged by a sentinel.

"*Vale*," growled out the rough voice of their conductor.

"Is it thou, Will?" said the guard. "And what neck art thou fitting for the noose; breeding occupation for the hangsman, I trow."

"Not half so ripe as thine own, gossip. Here be two gentles that have commission, I guess, to look at the beacons, to see they are in trim and properly watched. 'Tis well the guard is set. Holloa, Nicholas Dewhurst, bring the flagon. I am wheezing like an old wife's bellows, nigh disinherited of my birthright, the free quaffing o' the air. I shall die and be canonized."

Will, in his eagerness to attain this glorious end, left his companions with the sentinel, who speedily conducted them into a rude hut, erected as a temporary shelter to those on the look-out for signals. In this narrow shed a lamp was burning. Two of the abbot's servants, stretched before a smouldering heap of turf, were scarcely roused by the vociferations of Will, as he strode over them on his way to the provender. A long pull, and a loud smack, announced the satisfactory relish that ensued.

"Hoa, ye lozel knaves!—who sleeps when Will's awake?" This reflection was accompanied by a smart blow on that part of the recumbent's person where it was most conveniently administered.

"Begone, sot!" was the abrupt reply, not overabundantly expressive of good humour at this disturbance. Will looked again towards the flagon; but great was his dismay on beholding it in the very act of disemboguing its precious contents into another

gulf as insatiable as his own. Ralph Newcome, incited thereto by his own discrimination, together with the resistless relish of their guide, as soon as the latter had partially concluded, took up the subject, and long, powerful, and undeviating were the requisitions that he made.

" Plague on thy civility !—A fly will drink from anybody's cup, and so will a Yorkshireman," growled the uncourteous churl.

Ralph had, however, braced himself tightly to the task, and stood with an air of dogged defiance, stoutly confronting his accuser—though, being a man of few words, the principal weight of the argument rested upon Will, whose eloquence was with difficulty interrupted on any subject.

" Peace," said one of the sleepers, raising himself half-way—" I think we be like to bide here till our bones rot. There's naught but the same dun sky—black, black, and unchanging. I should like to see a stiff blaze from some quarter. Our bundle, here, would soon be in a low."

" Hark ! " said the other, " 'tis something creaking amongst the faggots."

The sentinel rushed out, but the beacon was undisturbed.

" St. Mary protect us !—'Tis the same noise I heard last night ; and about the same hour."

The stranger here entered the hut. Enveloped in a huge cloak, he sat silent, and apparently inattentive ; but the conversation was now abrupt, and broken down into short and interrupted whispers.

" I wish old Hal and his wives were here, with all my heart," said one : " we'd have a rare bonfire. How his fat paunch would swell ! But for him and his unlucky women, we had been snug in the chimney-corner, snoring our psalmody, or helping old Barn'by off with the tit-bits in the kitchen."

" Hush ! " said his neighbour : " there be the faggots

talking again. I think they are bewitched.—Dan, look to them."

"Nay," said Dan, "they may bide awhile for me."

The words were scarcely uttered when the building seemed in a blaze. Crash upon crash followed. The inmates, stupefied with terror, were well nigh suffocated ere their astonishment left them the power to escape. In the full conviction that the foul fiend had taken him at his word, Dan was dragged from the hut, wan, speechless, and gasping with affright. Nothing less, too, than a visit from his Satanic majesty in person was expected by the terrified rustics.

On gaining the outside, the whole burning mass was before them, one vast pyramid of flame. Flakes of blazing matter were hurled into the sky, with short and rapid explosions. The roar of the wind through the glowing furnace was awful and appalling. Huge and ignited fragments were borne away with frightful rapidity. They rode on the rolling volumes of smoke like fire-fiends armed with destruction; but the vast reservoir of flame still glowed on, apparently undiminished. The curtain of night seemed to be suddenly undrawn. Objects the most minute were visible as in the broad view of day. The brown heath, the grey and the mossy stone, were each distinguishable, but clad alike in one bright and unvarying colour, red as the roaring furnace. Soon the great magazine of inflammable matter in the interior caught fire, and rolled out in a wide mass of light, like the first burst of a volcano.

The stranger stood with apparent unconcern his back to the flames, looking from the brink of the mountain northward, as if on the watch for corresponding signals. Soon a bright star hung on the heights above Sawley. Increasing in splendour, another broke out on the verge of the horizon, marking the site of the camp near Romald's Moor.

Turning towards the south-west, and looking to the right, beyond the chain of successive heights that form

the vale of Todmorden, he beheld a dim spark in the distance, from the summit of Hades Hill, scarcely penetrating the mist which hung like a dense cloud in that direction; this place and Thieveley Pike forming the connecting-links between Pendle Hill and Buckton Castle.

The terrified attendants knew too well the results which would follow this unaccountable and irreparable mistake. The whole country would be in commotion. Hordes of zealous and fanatic idlers and malcontents would repair to the appointed rendezvous, and this premature, and perhaps fatal movement, would be attributed to their carelessness. Paslew, not over-nice in discriminating their several deserts, would doubtless subject them to immediate and condign punishment.

These were thoughts common to each, unquestionable and conclusive; but what answer to give, or what excuse to make, was far from being decided upon with the same degree of certainty.

"We shall be hanged without mercy," was the dread sum of these uncomfortable reflections.

"I know not what you may be," said Will; "but I intend to run for it. I've an old dame would make a sore disturbance at my death, more especially if dangling from the gallows-tree, which of all the trees in the wood hath been my aversion ever since I saw Long Tom of the Nab make so uncomfortable a shriving from thence."

"Run, then," said Nicholas, rather stoutly, and in a tone of more confidence than heretofore. "I'll stay my ground this bout; and, further, I do propose to commit yon knaves into the holy keeping of our four-cornered crib, where they may be indulged in recreations of another sort than setting the whole country by the ears. 'Twill save our necks to slip theirs into the noose."

This happy suggestion, the whole of these honest and conscientious servants of the Church were prepared to

obey. They might with safety accuse the strangers; indeed, it was more than probable they had hit out the right source of the mischief; so, marching up boldly to the execution of this Christian purpose, they were proceeding to lay hands on the foremost of the culprits. At this critical moment he turned suddenly round. Perhaps from a prior suspicion of their intentions, or from the knavish cast of their countenances, he saw that hostilities were in contemplation: at any rate, he seemed to be prepared for the event. Will, being the mouthpiece of the party, and accustomed, moreover, at times to a precise and methodical manner of delivery, was the chief speaker.

"Sir, we arrest you for high treason. You are charged with firing off beacons without our privity or consent, thereby endangering the safety of the lord abbot, and the peaceable governing of this realm." He paused, quaking even at his own eloquence; but the stranger made no reply, till, throwing aside his cloak, he drew out a hagbut or demi-hague as it was sometimes called, being a sort of small harquebuss, with its match ready kindled.

"Tell the Abbot of Whalley that neither ye nor the whole horde of drones and drivellers about his hive, shall take me against my own liberty and consent. Hold back! Your first step is your last, save to your grave! I will see the abbot shortly, but not by your grace or assistance." Saying this, he bounded down the steep like the roused deer, in its first pride of flight, scorning the chase. The light flashing from his weapons marked his form rapidly receding from their grasp.

But Ralph, who, as we may suppose, was minded to imitate the evolutions of his master, being it seemed of a more heavy and considerate demeanour, paused for a space ere he leapt.

This deliberation was fatal to his enterprise. The enemy, recovering from their confusion, seized him in default of his master, and without further ado bore him

away as a visible acquittance of themselves to the abbot. There could be no great harm in throwing the blame of this unlucky affair on the companion of the escaped incendiary: besides, it would be an effective lesson to him on the danger of keeping bad company.

Through bog and brake, over moor and mountain, they hurried on with their prisoner, who, dooming them all to "clootie" and his imps, and commending himself to Michael, Mary, and a number of his especial patrons in the Romish calendar, was urged forward with more than their usual speed.

The blaze had ceased to be visible when they came to the last descent towards the village. Far and wide the alarm had spread; consternation and inquiry were on every countenance. The guards were besieged with anxious faces, supplicating intelligence, and much impeded thereby in their progress to the abbey.

Outside the gates they found a dense crowd waiting for the news. The abbot and his brethren were in close council, expecting every moment the arrival of warders from the beacon.

They were hurried into the chapter-house, together with their prisoner, who had now taken to the sulks, refusing any reply to the numerous inquiries made by the servants who followed, eager for the final disclosure.

The room was lighted by a single lamp. Little of the interior was visible, save the grim and ascetic faces of the monks who sat nearest to the centre of illumination. Their features, in deep masses of alternate light and shadow, looked as if carved out, hard and immovable, from the oak wainscot. Occasionally, a dull roll of the eye relieved the oppressive stillness, and the gazer would look out from the mystic world he inhabited, through these loop-holes of sense, into the world of sympathies and affections, with which he had long ceased to hold communion.

Paslew was standing when they entered. His bushy grey eyebrows threw a strange and almost unnatural

shade over the deep recesses beneath, across which, at times, like the foam swept over the dark billows of the spirit, a light and glowing track was visible, marking the powerful conflict within.

"Nicholas Dewhurst and Daniel Haydock."

He shaded his eyes from the light, as he thus addressed the foremost of the party who had just entered.

"From what quarter was the signal first visible?"

"My lord," said Dan, "we are but unworthy of your highness' grace, did we not answer truly."

"Quick!—Thou art slower to thine answers than thy words. Why tarriest thou?"

"If your highness will pardon——"

"What?" said Paslew, in a voice that made the culprits quake. "I pardon nothing. What means this silence?"

"Please your reverence," said Will, now advancing from the rear, his rhetorical flourishes somewhat curtailed, and his confidence thereby wonderfully abated, "the first signal was our own, lighted by an incendiary, to wit, and here we bring him to your highness' reverence for judgment. We ordered the rope and the broad beam to be ready by daybreak."

It were idle to paint the astonishment and dismay which this short narrative produced. Paslew immediately saw the dangers by which he was involved. He was, by this desperate and unfortunate act, at once committed to the measures from which he had hitherto kept aloof, and he must now stand foremost in the cause, or tamely submit to the infuriate vengeance which this overt act of rebellion would inevitably hasten. He had hoped that, sheltered in this quiet nook, he should escape without being made a party in the contest, and rest secure until hotter heads and lighter brains had fought the battles that would leave him in possession of the spoil. If the king's party were triumphant, he fancied that, by seeming to take little or no part in the hostilities then abroad, his house might be spared in

the general wreck that would ensue; but all these schemes of deep-laid policy and ambition were in a moment dissipated. No time was to be lost. The whole country would instantly be in array, and the beacon-light of Pendle proclaim Paslew as the source and instigator of this second rebellion. It would be in vain to stay the rising. Some enemy of his house, or some desperate adventurer, wishful to further his own schemes at another's expense, was doubtless the author of this mischief. The whole was but the discovery of a moment. Almost before the dark thought was visible on the brow he cried out:

"Bring forward the traitor!"

But Ralph, on the first hearing of this accusation, strode forward, even to the table, where sat the awful conclave astonished at his temerity. He stood calmly erect, surveying his judges with a countenance scarcely moved from its usually hard and stolid expression.

"If it be true," cried he, "as these idlers do aver, I am here to answer. If it be false, they must look to it."

The abbot frowned at this presumptuous speech.

"Who art thou?"

"Marry, an ass ridden by fools."

"Knave, see thou be discreet and respectful in thine answers. There be whipping-posts for knaves, and stocks for the correction of fools."

"Why, if it be for the matter of my name, I trow, 'tis of an honest Christian-like and well-conditioned flavour; comes out of the mouth sharp as a beer-spigot. Men call me Ralph."

"And from whence?" said the abbot impatiently.

"These knaves of thy breeding can tell best. 'Tis a road I never before travelled; and, by your grace's favour, I do not mean to jog on it again."

"He is servant to the stranger yeoman whom your worship entertained a few hours back, on some private errand," said one of the auditors.

A sharp guess at the truth raised a slight quiver on

the abbot's lip. The conversation of the stranger, the anxiety he displayed, with that of his brother of Kirkstall, seemed to point out the source and cause of his disaster.

"Now, varlet, answer truly, or thou diest," said Paslew, with a significant shake of the finger. "At whose instigation hast thou committed this foul treason against our house, and the good prospering of this realm?"

"The deed was not mine."

"Believe him not, my lord—we are upon our testimony," said the accusers.

Ralph, turning aside, met them face to face. He commenced a short but shrewd examination, as follows:

"You were a-watching, I suppose?" said he carelessly.

"Aye, were we," sharply replied three or four ready tongues.

"Then, how could I fire the beacon without your leave?"

A short pause evinced their dislike to this question, but Will, more ready than discreet, soon summoned assurance to meet the inquiry, thus:

"My lord, we had just taken them into the hut, thinking to show them a courtesy; but that knave's throat holds more liquor than his mother's kneading-trough, or——"

"If in the hut, how could I set the beacon in a low?"

"But thou hadst a companion," hastily shouted Nicholas, finding their first position untenable.

"And how comes it to pass that ye be taking or guiding thither any person, and more particularly wayfarers, whom we know not? How comes it, I say, that ye suffer this without my permission?" said the abbot, sternly.

"Will was their guide; and we cared not to refuse your reverence's messenger."

"My messenger!" returned Paslew, with a glance that almost bent them to the ground.

"Please your highness," said Will, falling on his knees, "the stranger was a-visiting of the beacons, so said he, to know if they were carefully watched. He came to me, as with an authority from your reverence, and I mounted them up to the guard-house unwillingly enough. 'Tis a sore pull for a pair of shanks like mine."

The abbot now saw plainly into the machinations by which he had been betrayed, and reprimanding his men for their negligence, and so careless an observance of his commands, ordered them off severally to the stocks. Their lamentations were loud but unavailing, especially when they found that Ralph was simply dismissed, for a space, to solitary confinement.

Yet was Paslew still at a loss to determine whence this subtle device originated, unless from his brother of Kirkstall, and he resolved to question Ralph secretly. It was owing to this purpose probably that the usual summary process of executive justice was not more speedily administered.

A great marvel and gossip, as may readily be supposed, now arose throughout the whole country. Rumour with her hundred tongues, flew fast, and her wide wings overspread the land. From all quarters, conformably to the signal, the levies marched with great rapidity to Doncaster, where they found Lord D'Arcy, who seemed to feel, or to feign, astonishment at this sudden rising without his orders. One and all proclaimed that the appointed signal was from the Abbot of Whalley, at whose war-inciting torch the whole line of beacons had been kindled. A messenger, however, was soon forwarded to the camp, from Paslew, with an explanation of the affair, while at the same time he demanded their aid for the discovery and punishment of the offenders. But D'Arcy and Aske were too well pleased to see Paslew's crafty and selfish plans frustrated, whilst

he was irretrievably committed to their cause. Tired of waiting the tardy result of negotiations with their sovereign, these ambitious spirits were glad to behold their army once more menacing the royalist position, hoping it would either quicken or terminate these dilatory proceedings. But the Duke of Norfolk and the Earl of Shrewsbury, at the news of this unexpected rising, were mightily amazed. Their plans were at once terminated. Their emissaries had failed to bring intelligence previously of the intended gathering. In the midst of their dilemma word was brought that the Abbot of Whalley had first lighted up the blaze of insurrection. Secretly resolving that this meddling priest should sorely rue his mischievous exploit, they again found themselves unwillingly obliged to enter into fresh stipulations with their adversaries, though determining on delay, if possible, in the hope of dividing their leaders, and of extinguishing the rebellion in detail.

But we would crave the reader's return to the abbey, where Ralph was left in strict durance, and possibly in some danger from the vindictive purposes of the abbot.

Early on the following morning he was aroused from a deep-toned and laborious stertoration, by a figure that shook him as he lay, in a somewhat unceremonious fashion. The intruder was wrapped in a thick cloak or tunic, and he stood gruffly erect by the straw couch, whereon the prisoner's night-dreams had nestled in their first existence.

"I marvel thou sleepest so soundly! Thou art the first knave, I trow, that hast welcomed these walls with so loud a clarion."

"And what should ail the well-earned slumbers of Ralph Newcome? His sleep may be as sound as some of those, mayhap, that have softer beds and gayer clothing."

"But the gallows, man!—Hast had no glimpse of the noose in thy visions?"

"Peradventure the hemp is not sown that shall make

my collar. When the hangman comes, 'tis time enough to wake; so, I pray thee, bereave not a poor man of the only solace the rich cannot purchase from him."

"Thou art a plain-spoken varlet, and I would but ask thy master's name and condition. Answer me straight—no equivocation, no shuffling or evasion shall serve thee; 'tis a stale device now, and will not avail."

"And who art thou, friend, that hast such a greedy appetite for men's names, thou canst not rest a-bed for the craving of thy stomach?"

"I am the abbot, and thou a prisoner in this good house. Fearful odds, methinks, for the strife."

"Now hark thee, most reverend abbot, my name thou knowest at a peradventure: but for the name of my master, as thou callest him, seeing it be a notable secret, thou mightest as well go ask his goshawk yonder, who, I guess, continues an unworthy prisoner as well as myself."

"I'll have the truth wrung from thy tongue. Thumbscrews and iron mittens will not be denied so easily."

"Humph!" said Ralph; "these be rare things for cracking the shell; but, for all that, I wot they'll not get at the kernel."

"What! defiest thou my power?—in my own custody, too?" Paslew grew pale with anger; but the impolicy of this proceeding soon suggested itself to his wary, though at times impetuous temper. Yet the stubborn disposition of his prisoner resisted alike his cajolements and his threats.

In vain were offers of reward multiplied; nor bribe nor entreaty could avail. Paslew then left him, threatening to extract by force what milder measures had failed to elicit. He had that morning despatched a messenger to the rebel chiefs at Doncaster with an explanation of the accident, likewise with an assurance of his good wishes to the cause; but still he delayed to go in person, or to send his quota of levies.

True, however, to his threats, if not to his promises,

towards the close of the day he again visited the dungeon. He was accompanied by two grim attendants, whom he ordered to wait outside until their services should be required.

Ralph was striding lustily, and with evident impatience, over the damp floor ; yet he scarcely seemed to notice the entrance of the abbot.

" How now !—Hast had aught, by way of special discovery, touching the name thou hadst forgotten this morning ? "

" Yes, I have had a notable discovery therein," said Ralph, still holding on his pace diagonally, as heretofore.

" And may we graciously participate in the result ? Doubtless 'tis a comfortable and happy revelation," said the abbot.

" 'Tis to beware of three most unlucky things, persons, or properties, I trow—to wit, a parson's maid, a prior's sow, and an abbot's dinner."

" And what lack they in thy honest esteem ? "

" A parson's maid lacks honesty—a prior's sow a litter—and an abbot's dinner lacks me ! "

" Or rather, thou lackest it."

" Why, troth, I am not over-nice in the disposition of vain words ; nor should I be over-nice in the disposal of some light scraps from your reverence's buttery."

" Thou hast not dined ? "

" Peradventure not at thy cost."

" Perchance an empty stomach may be the more apt to yield. A full belly makes a stout heart."

" I know not. But hasten, I beseech thee. Thy questions over, we may make merry together. Nothing less than a full flagon and a prime haunch will suffice."

Ralph rubbed his hands at the bare idea of these prospective dainties.

" Wilt thou now disclose the name of thy master ? "

" No," said Ralph ; " and now for dinner."

" Prythee, in what haste ? " returned Paslew, with

a grin of cruel and malicious irony. "There be some slight preliminaries to adjust—something to season thy haunch and whet thine appetite." He stamped with his foot, and the two attendants entered, bearing instruments of uncouth and horrid appearance.

"Thou mayest spare my bones and thy gimcracks. With all thy screwing, thou canst not yet squeeze raindrops from the rock."

"I cry thee favour. Thou hast dared the stroke—thou hast courted the vengeance thou wouldest withstand, but thou shalt yield or break. Seize him."

"Stand back, caitiffs!" said Ralph, with a look of deep and unutterable scorn. "But to thee!—words would fail to express my contempt, my derision, my defiance of thy puny power! Read, and skulk back to thy cell!"

He drew from his doublet a small roll of parchment, which Paslew, with unfeigned astonishment and vexation, recognized as a safe warranty from the Archbishop of York, wherein the bearer, under whatever manner or distinction he might choose to adopt, was charged with a secret mission from the leaders of the "*Pilgrimage*," touching the success and well-being of the Catholic faith, and the prosperity of the Holy Church. All abbots, priests, and others, being true sons of the Church, were called on to aid and comfort him in the due exercise of his mission, to furnish him with a safe passage, and to obey his bidding without let or question.

"Herein fail not at your peril!" said Ralph, eyeing the abbot with a glance of cool and deliberate scorn.

"Why was not this protection from his Grace given to me before?" inquired Paslew beseechingly.

"That thy deceit and double-dealing might be the more manifest. Yesternight thou didst refuse thine aid until the beacon of insurrection should be kindled. When kindled, and upon thine own ground, too, still thou holdest back! But think not to escape!—Think not to watch in safety whilst others work. Whoever

wins in this perilous game, thou wilt lose. Marked out for destruction, thine own policy will betray thee. Choose thee one party, and thou hast yet one chance of safety. But double-dealers, such as thou, do ever tumble into the trap baited by their own cunning."

"Will his Grace of York expect my presence at the camp?"

"It is needful thou make thy peace either with him or with the king," said Ralph: "yet am I bold to tell thee, that with Harry thine hope of reconciliation is past. The news, ere this, hath reached Norfolk's ear, and the beacon-light of Pendle, the first blaze and signal of the insurrection, denounces the Abbot of Whalley as a ringleader, and as having first kindled the torch of rebellion."

With a malicious smile, cruel as the triumph of the fiend at the torments of his victim, did this mysterious foe exhibit to him the toils that had been, during his unsuspecting security, wound about him.

"Thine only hope is from his Grace; go with me, and thou mayest yet dwell in safety, and thine house be established."

Paslew saw with dismay the dark gulf which yawned on either hand, and the net so craftily prepared to entangle him. His only hope of security, however, was a prompt acquiescence in the plan pointed out by the stranger, who accordingly engaged to conduct him without delay to the appointed rendezvous.

Passing over the difficulties of the journey, the accidents by the way, the slips and damages of sumpter-horses, and their often trackless march over the hills, let us behold Paslew, after some narrow escapes from the royalist forces, taking up his quarters at an obscure lodging hard by the town of Doncaster, and nigh to the cantonments of the rebel chiefs, whose forces were once more in formidable array, occupying a conspicuous position on the left bank of the river Don.

The left wing of the royalist troops was flanked by a

deep morass, called Potterie Car; and their right protected by the walls of the town.

The morning that followed Paslew's arrival was the time appointed for a general attack by the rebels, who considerably outnumbered the more disciplined but less zealous army of their sovereign, D'Arcy and his associates intending to cross the river by daybreak, with the utmost secrecy, hoping to take the royalist forces by surprise.

Paslew arrived alone, just as the consultation of the chiefs was breaking up. His companion, Ralph, had left him some hours before, and galloped on at full speed, first giving directions as to the course he should take, and the measures he was to adopt on his arrival. Conducted in due form to the archbishop's presence, Paslew found his Grace at supper. The repast was sumptuous, and served up in great state. This high dignitary seldom stirred but with his kitchen-furniture and service for the table, which last was of massy silver, beautifully wrought and embellished. His servants were apparelled in all the pomp and insignia of office; but he affected great plainness and simplicity, both of dress and demeanour. At his right hand sat a stout, muscular figure, whom Paslew immediately recognized, with unequivocal demonstrations of surprise, to be his umquhile prisoner Ralph Newcome, now habited in a plain suit of velvet, and looking like a country gentleman of some rank and importance. His manner was, however, coarse and abrupt ; and he still seemed nothing loth to sustain his full complement of liquor. On the left of the archbishop sat his nameless visitor at the abbey, whose personal accomplishments he had good cause to remember. Below them sat several chiefs of the confederacy, apparently of an inferior rank.

"Abbot Paslew," said His Grace, "thou art a tardy, and it may be undutiful son. Thine homage to the Church has not been either freely or faithfully rendered ; yet does she now welcome thee to her embrace, with

the promise of a free and unconditional forgiveness."

"Aye," said he of His Grace's right hand, "Abbot Paslew was of too great weight in the scale of events to be left to choose his own side of the balance. I am right fain of his company, and in troth he can use the persuasions well—the thumbscrews and tight boots upon occasion."

" Master Aske," replied the archbishop, " if the sons that our mother hath suckled and nourished from her own grace and bounty were every of them as true as thou art, who yet receivest not of her temporal favours, then would her kingdom be enlarged, and her arms should outstretch to the utmost verge and compass of all visible things. But there be evil men and seducers abroad, traitors to their altar and their faith." Here he paused, but presently continued, " My friends, though our religion be meek and lowly, yet does it not deny to us the comforts but sparingly scattered through this vain and perishing world."

His Grace here filled a cup of spiced sack, inviting Paslew to partake of their humble entertainment. Bewildered and intimidated, he yet obeyed with all due reverence and courtesy.

" Confusion to the heretic king ! " cried he on the left of the archbishop, filling his glass, and at the same time taking special note that the guests should repeat this bold and startling treason.

" Lord D'Arcy," said one of the guests, " thou hast imbibed that wish so oft in thy drink, that should the king catch thee he may find it branded in thy four quarters, when they are cut up to ornament His Majesty's posterns."

" And what might he find on thine, Norton ? " said the fiery leader.

" A cook's rolling-pin and a mutton pasty." A loud laugh here announced the hit, of which this sally was the bearer, it being levelled directly at the well-known

propensities of the personage to whom it was addressed.

"Come, friends all," said the archbishop; "let not the gibe and jest go round; there be matters of graver import that should occupy us this night. To-morrow, let the elements be propitious, and the day is won."

"Od's life," said Aske; "surely the rain will not again prevent us from passing the river, as it did in our last campaign?"

"If it do," cried a deep and melancholy voice from the lower end of the table, "then will I say this Pilgrimage of Grace is the device of man, and not of God, and the work will not prosper."

This ominous anticipation seemed to strike terror into the most stout-hearted. "Foul fa' the croaking raven!" said Aske. "No good comes on't, when the Lord of Ravenswood breaks from his usual silence. Mischief follows, safe as the bolt after the flash."

"Hush! my son," said the archbishop to this bird of ill omen; "thou speakest unwisely. 'Tis not for us to adjudge the displeasure of Heaven upon slight testimonies. He trieth our faith, when the dark cloud overshadoweth His mercy. But let us not dishonour this good cause, and weaken our hands by indulging in such gloomy anticipations. The night showeth little token of a change, and when I was last abroad, the river passed on, shallow and murmuring, over the ford."

The guests were fully occupied to a late hour in discussing the plan of attack, the occupation of the town, together with subsequent arrangements; after which, with mutual anticipations of success, the company departed.

Paslew, on retiring to his chamber, though much fatigued, found himself unable to sleep. The dark chaos of events brooded heavily upon his brain. Feverish and excited, the dread to-morrow seemed already pressing on the past, mingling its deep and unseen

flood with the full tide of existence. The whirl and eddy, created by the conflict, lashed his thoughts almost to madness. He grew appalled. The billows blackened as they rose. He seemed sinking, overwhelmed in the struggle, and his spirit quivered as they passed. He arose, darting an anxious glance through the low casement. The moon was riding on the top of a huge mountain of clouds towards the north-west. As he gazed they came rapidly athwart the heavens, like the wings of some terrible demon visibly unfolding. On a sudden the door of his chamber flew open. He started forward to meet the intruder, but there was no footstep—no sound save the hurrying gusts that foreran the approaching tempest. Soon like a mighty deluge it burst on at once in its full vigour, as though it would overwhelm creation once more in immediate ruin. The roll of the river answered swiftly to the tempest's voice, now swollen to a huge and foaming torrent, rising rapidly over its level banks, and threatening devastation on every side. Paslew quaked. Gloomy forebodings crept upon him. He beheld in this strange visitation another and a manifest interposition of Heaven, fighting against the cause he had unhappily espoused. Rest was out of the question, his whole thoughts being occupied in the contrivance of measures for his own immediate safety.

In the morning consternation had seized the whole camp. They beheld the muddy and turbulent waters before them, again frustrating their hopes, levelling their proud schemes, and fighting visibly and irresistibly against them, in front of their adversaries. So intimidated were the troops, and so convinced that their cause was now hopeless, that not all the persuasions and threatenings of their leaders, nor the archbishop's promises of an eternal reward, could prevent the breaking up of this vast multitude, and the hasty dispersion of the rebel host.

Ere morning Paslew was gone. He liked not the dust

from a falling house. Weary and alone he came back to his dwelling on the tenth day after his departure.

From this time danger and misfortune crowded fast upon that devoted house. The dark course of events unfolded with frightful rapidity, and Paslew, by many a vain contrivance, sought to avert the king's displeasure and his own doom. A relaxation of some measures more than ordinarily severe was attempted ; and we find, from existing records, that a pension of ten marks per annum was granted to Thomas Cromwell, the king's secretary and principal visitor—whether in the way of bribe or fee is not certain.

It shows, however, the humiliating and submissive circumstances to which the monks were now reduced. They were indeed fallen from that high estate when kings were their tributaries, and empires too narrow for the wide grasp of their ambition. The following is a copy of Thomas Cromwell's indulgence, taken from the Townley MSS. :

" To all estates due honour and reverence, and to all other commendacioun in our Lord everlastyng. Know ye that we John, abbot of ye monasterie of our blessed Ladie of Whalley, in Com. Lanc., by ye assente and consente of ye convente, have freely granted unto ye right honourable Mr. Tho. Cromwell, secretarie, general visitor, and principal official to our most sovereign Lord Kyng Hen. VIII, an annual rent or fee of vi : xiii : iv : yerele, to be paide at ye nativitie of St. John Baptist unto ye saide Maister Thomas Cromwell. Wee, ye saide abbot and convent have put to ye same our handes and common seale. Yeven at Whalley 1st Jan. 28 Hen. VIII."

But every act of submission, every stratagem and advice, had failed to ward off the blow. Within ten weeks from the date of this document there was neither abbot nor abbey of Whalley.

After the dispersion, imprisonment, and execution of the principal leaders of the rebellion, the day of

reckoning and retribution was at hand. Shrewsbury, by the king's orders, sent a herald with a troop of horse, who, taking Paslew, Eastgate, Haydock, and some others of the monks prisoners, they were arraigned at Lancaster, and convicted of high treason. On the 12th March, 1537, Paslew was conveyed back to Whalley for execution, where, in a field called the Holehouses, immediately facing the house of his birth, a gallows was erected, on which Paslew and Eastgate suffered punishment, or martyrdom, for the story varies according to the bias of the party by whom it is told. Haydock was carried to Padiham, and died there the same ignominious death on the day following. The monks, driven from their asylum, escaped into France, with the exception of a few, who lingered near the scenes of their former enjoyments, hovering like departed hopes round the ruin to which they clung.

SIR EDWARD STANLEY

" Why, then, the world's mine oyster,
Which I with sword will open ! "

" God never wrought *miracles* to convince atheism, because His ordinary works convince it."—*Bacon.*

" No man doubts of a Supreme Being, until from the consciousness of His provocations, it becomes his interest there should be none."—*Government of the Tongue.*

" Men are atheistical because they are first vicious, and question the *truth* of Christianity because they hate the *practice.*" —*South.*

The following will, perhaps, be thought misplaced as a polemical subject. But in relating what may be conceived as the true motive that incited Sir Edward Stanley to the founding of that beautiful structure Hornby Chapel, we may be allowed to show the operation as well as the effect—to trace the steps by which his conversion from an awful and demoralising infidelity was accomplished.

We have borrowed some of the arguments from " Leslie's Short Method with the Deists," condensing and illustrating them as the subject seemed to require. We hope to be pardoned this freedom ; the nature of the question would necessarily refer to a range of argument and reply in frequent use ; and all that we could expect to accomplish was to place the main arguments in such a position as to receive the light of some well-known and self-evident truth.

The dark transactions to which the " Parson of Slaidburn " obscurely refers may be found in Whitaker's " Whalley," pp. 475, 476.

The same historian remarks in another work,—" From several hints obliquely thrown out by friends as well as enemies, this man appears to have been a very wicked person, of a cast and character very uncommon in those unreflecting times." " There certainly was something very extra-

ordinary about the man, which, amidst the feodal and knightly habits in which young persons of his high rank were then bred, prompted him to speculate, however unhappily, on any metaphysical subject. Now, whether this abominable persuasion were the cause or the effect of his actual guilt,—whether he had reasoned himself into materialism in order to drown the voice of conscience, or fell into the sin of murder because he had previously reasoned himself out of all ideas of responsibility, does not appear ; but his practice, as might have been expected, was suited to his principles, and Hornby was too rich a bait to a man who hoped for no enjoyment but in the present life, and feared no retribution in another. Accordingly, we find him loudly accused of having poisoned his brother-in-law, John Harrington, by the agency of a servant ; and he is suspected also of having, through subornation of perjury, proved, or attempted to prove, himself tenant of the honour of Hornby."

Sir Edward Stanley, the fifth son of Thomas, first Earl of Derby, early received the notice and favour of his sovereign King Henry the Eighth. It is said of him, "The camp was his school, and his learning the pike and sword." The king's greeting, when they met, was "*Ho! my soldier.*" Honour floated in his veins, and valour danced in his spirits. At the battle of Flodden he commanded the rear of the English army, and was attacked by the Earls of Lennox and Argyle, both of whom were slain, together with the King of Scots, on that memorable day. Through his great bravery and skill he mainly contributed to its success. A sudden feint inducing the Scots to descend a hill, their stronghold, an opening was caused in their ranks, which Sir Edward Stanley espying, he attacked them on the sudden with his Lancashire bowmen. So unexpected an assault put them into great disorder, which gave the first hopes of success, and kindled fresh courage through the English ranks, ending in the complete overthrow and discomfiture of their enemies.

Upon this signal achievement, Sir Edward Stanley, being much advanced thereby in the king's favour, received from the hand of his royal master a letter of thanks, together with an assurance of some future reward. Accordingly, we are told, the year ensuing, the king keeping Whitsuntide at Eltham in Kent, Sir Edward being in his train, he commanded that, for his valiant acts against the Scots, when he won the hill and relieved the English from their distress, an achievement worthy of his ancestors, who bore an eagle on their crest, he should be created Lord Monteagle; whereupon he had a special summons to parliament in the same year by the title of Baron Stanley, Lord Monteagle.

"Twice did he and Sir John Wallop penetrate, with only eight hundred men, into the very heart of France, and four times did he and Sir Thomas Lovell save Calais —the first time by intelligence, the second by stratagem, the third by their valour and undaunted courage, and the fourth by their unwearied patience and assiduity." "In the dangerous insurrection by Aske and Captain Cobler, his zeal for the prince's service and the welfare of his country caused him to outstrip his sovereign's commands by putting himself at the head of his troops without the king's commission, for which dangerous piece of loyalty he asked pardon, and received thanks." By stirring up jealousy and sedition, too, amongst the rebels, he gave His Majesty time, by pretended treaties, to draw off the most eminent of the faction, and to overcome and dissipate the rest. Yet, with all this outward show of prosperity and the bruit of noble deeds so various and multiplied that Fame herself seemed weary of rehearsing them, there were not wanting evil reports and dark insinuations against his honour. Foul surmises prevailed, especially in the latter part of his life, as to the means by which he possessed himself of the estates he then held in right of his lady, and those too that he enjoyed through the attainder of her uncle, Sir James Harrington. He

acknowledged himself a freethinker and a materialist, a character of rare occurrence in those ages, showing him to be as daring in his opinions as in his pursuits. That the soul of man was like the winding up of a watch, and that when the spring was run down the man died, and the soul was extinct, are still recorded as his expressions. In those days of demoralizing ignorance, this open and unhesitating opinion might be the means of creating him many dangerous and deadly enemies, especially amongst the priesthood, whose office, though tending to higher and nobler ends than the mere thralling of man's spirit to creeds and systems of secular ambition, was yet but too often devoted to this purpose. Every power that human cruelty and ingenuity could compass was tried, but happily in vain, to confine the free and unfettered spirit for ever in the dark cells of ignorance and superstition.

From a number of unconnected accounts respecting this great, if not good man, whose virtues even would have been the vices of our own age, we find as the most prominent parts of his disposition a thorough contempt for the maxims and opinions of the world, and an utter recklessness of its censure or esteem. Marrying into the family of the Harringtons, he resided the latter part of his life at the Castle of Hornby, where we find him engaged in schemes for the most part tending to his own wealth and aggrandisement.

The chapel which he built is said to have been vowed at Flodden, but this statement is evidently untrue, having no foundation but the averments of those who content not themselves with a plain narrative of facts, but assume a licence to invent motives agreeable to their own folly or caprice. That Sir Edward Stanley made any such vow we cannot imagine, much less would he put it into execution. "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die," was the governing principle of his life, and the mainspring of his actions. It would be a strange anomaly in the records of human opinions to

find an edifice reared to perpetuate a belief which the founder thought a delusion, a mere system of priestcraft and superstition. To this prominent feature in his history our attention has been directed, and we think the following tradition assigns a better and more plausible motive for the founding of that beautiful structure, the chapel at Hornby.

It was by the still light of a cloudless harvest-moon that two men appeared to be sauntering up the stream that winds through the vale near Hornby. One of them wore a clerical habit, and the other, from his dress, seemed to attend in the capacity of a menial. They rested at the foot of a steep cliff overhung with firs and copse-wood. The castle, upon the summit, with its tall and narrow tower, like a feather stuck in its crown, was not visible from where they sat. The moon threw an unclouded lustre from her broad full face far away over the wide and heavy woods by which they were surrounded. A shallow bend of the stream towards the left glittered over its bed like molten silver, issuing from a dark and deep pool shaded by the jutting boughs and grim-visaged rocks from whence they hung.

The travellers now ascended by a narrow and precipitous path. Their task was continued with no little difficulty, by reason of the looseness of the soil, and the huge rocks that obstructed their progress. By dint of scrambling, rather than walking, they, however, approached to the summit, when a light became visible over the hill, growing brighter as they ascended. It was the castle turret, where Lord Monteagle generally spent the greater part of the night in study. Whatever might be the precise nature of his pursuits, they were not supposed to be of the most reputable sort.

"Wizard spells and rites unholy"

were said to occupy these midnight vigils. Often, as that lonely watch-tower caught the eye of the benighted peasant, did he cross himself, and fancy that

shadows were flitting to and fro on the trembling and distant beam.

"There it is," said the hindmost person, who was none other than the parson of Slaidburn, "That lantern, I think, is unquenchable. Does thy master never quit yon burning pinnacle?"

"May be," replied the servant, "he careth not to be oft abroad; and who dare thwart his will? 'Troth, he had need be of a tough temper that should give him speech unquestioned."

"They who hold a higher communion reck but little of this frail and pitiful dust," returned the clergyman, after a solemn pause. "It is enough that he hath sent for me. I would fain warn him ere he depart, else yon walls had not again echoed my footstep."

This confidential domestic spoke not; he was either too much attached to his master, or implicated with him, to hazard a remark.

The path was now wider and less difficult of access, leading over a pretty knoll, glittering like lode-stars in the dew, beyond which arose the huge and cumbrous pile then distinguished as the Castle of Hornby.

The barking of some half-dozen hoarse-mouthed dogs announced their approach. Passing over the drawbridge, they entered the courtyard, from whence a side postern at that time opened a communication to the turret-chamber without passing through the main building. A winding staircase led them directly to the summit. Soft gleams of moonlight came at intervals through the narrow loopholes, being the only help or direction whereby to accomplish their ascent. After a tedious gyration, which more than once made the hindmost party pause to obtain a respite, the guide opened a low door. It swung heavily aside, disclosing a small ante-room, destitute of all furniture save a large oaken chest, that seemed to be the depository, or "ark," as it was usually called, for the safe keeping of the family archives.

The conductor, approaching an opposite door, gave a private signal. It flew open as if by its own impulse, displaying a chamber of no mean dimensions, in which by the light from a gigantic lamp, was seen a figure seated before a table absolutely groaning with piles of books, and various apparatus of unknown and wondrous import. Instruments of unimaginable shape lay in heaps round the apartment ; their use it was impossible to conjecture. Furnaces, alembics, jars, glass, urinals and bottles of all sizes rendered the chamber perilous of access, save to those who were acquainted with the intricacies of this labyrinth. "Sir Edward," as he was yet generally styled, looked full at his visitors as they entered. His eye was large and dark, the expression fierce and commanding. He was clad in a gown of black silk, covering an inner vest of sables. From a broad belt, glittering with costly stones, hung a short sword and a pair of pistols richly embossed.

The upper portion of his head was bald ; the hair on its sides short and frizzly. His beard was of a reddish tinge, trimmed square and bushy, beneath which his white ruff seemed to glisten from the sudden contrast. His forehead was high and retreating ; his face pale, and his cheek hollow and slightly wrinkled. His nose was small, looking ill-suited to the other features, which were large and strongly-marked. His mouth was full, but compressed ; and his teeth beautifully white and well shaped. When he spoke, they were much exposed, projecting slightly, and tending to give an air of ferocity to his countenance.

In stature he was tall and well formed. Proudly upright in his gait and attitude, he appeared like one born to be obeyed—to rule in whatsoever station he occupied.

"Sir Hugh Parker. The parson of Slaidburn is welcome to Hornby," said Lord Monteagle, rising. "It is long since we have met. I claim the privilege of old fellowship : give me thy hand."

"My lord, I am here at your request. Your wishes are commands with my poor endeavours."

"Thou mayest retire, Maudsley," said the baron to his servant, motioning him to depart. The minister was accommodated with a low stool, made vacant for the occasion. Lord Monteagle, closing the book, abruptly addressed his visitor.

"I knew thou wast in the neighbourhood, and I would unravel a few arguments with thee; a few quiddities about thy profession. I know thou art skilful at thy trade, which, though a vocation having its basis in fraud, finding countenance through the weakness and credulity of mankind, doth yet hold the commonalty in thrall and terror—a restraint which none other scheme might peradventure impose."

"You are too harsh, my lord. I minister not to aught that my conscience disapproves. Being of the Reformed Church, I do not mightily affect creeds and opinions. The Bible is the fountain, pure and undefiled; its waters fertilize and invigorate the seed of the faith, but choke and rot the rampant weeds of error and superstition."

"The Bible! A forgery: the invention of a cunning priesthood to mask and perpetuate their delusions. Prove its falsehoods to be the truth. Distinguish me thy revelation from the impostures of Mahomet, the dreams of the Sibyls, and the lying oracles of Heathenrie. Oblige me either to renounce my reason and the common principles which distinguish truth from error, or to admit the proof thou shalt allege, which proof, look thee, must be such as no imposture can lay claim to, otherwise it proves thy doctrine to be an imposture. If thy religion be true, there *must* be such a proof. For if the Being who gave this revelation which He requires all men to receive, have left His own truth destitute of the only proof which can distinguish it from an imposture, this will be an impeaching of His wisdom, an error in the very outset of the case, proving Him not the Allwise, but liable to infirmity and error. This,

thou seest, will bring our debate within a narrow compass."

"Nevertheless, I must own the task is hard," replied the clergyman, "because of the blindness and impotency of that same reason of which thou vauntest, and the feebleness of our mental sight; for we cannot come at any abstract truth whatsoever but by many inferences hanging together as by a chain, one link of which, not fully apprehended or made fast, loosens the whole, and the argument falls to the ground."

"Does the reformed doctrine, too, require a belief in what the hearer may not comprehend?" said the baron scornfully.

"Nay, there is a sufficiency in the evidence, and a fulness in this testimony, of which none other history can boast. What book is that, my lord?"

"The Anabasis."

"By whom?"

"Surely thou art in jest. 'Tis Xenophon's."

"How? Xenophon!" said the divine; "methinks thou speakest unadvisedly. My reason or apprehension knoweth not of such a man, or that he writ this book, and yet thou boldly affirmest the history to be true!"

"I know not that it was ever doubted," replied the other. "The common consent and belief of mankind, the transmission of the record from remote ages, are of themselves no mean evidence of its truth. But there must have been a time when it was first written, and as he appeals in it to facts, to matters which were then of recent occurrence, and to the public knowledge and belief of those facts, surely every of these statements would have insured detection, especially if put forth at or about the time when the events took place. Would it not have been madness to appeal to eye-witnesses of transactions which never happened, which witnesses were then alive, and could easily have belied such an impudent and furtive attempt at imposture? The idea seems almost too absurd to refute."

"Thou judgest well. It would be madness and absurdity in the extreme to deny the existence of thy historian, or the events to which he refers; and yet a record which to thee is of the greatest moment, wherein thine own interests are for ever involved, and to the truth of which there is much more clear and irrefragable testimony, thou rejectest as a fraud and an imposture."

"What proof can its promulgers give me of the infallibility of their doctrines, even supposing these events to be true?"

"Miracles, acknowledged to be such, contravening and transcending the common course of nature—these, I reckon, will be a sufficient warranty that the message is from the great Author of all things Himself."

"I own these are the strongest evidences that I could require, and I would admit them if I had witnessed their performance."

"Good. Now to the proof. It is impossible that any simple fact could be imposed, or that a number of persons could be made to believe they had witnessed such fact, unless it had actually taken place. For instance, if I were to assert that I had divided the waters of this river here, in the presence of the inhabitants, and that I had once led the whole of them over dryshod, the waters standing like a wall on each side, to guard their path, appealing to them at the same time in proof of my testimony; it would be impossible, I say, to convince those people it were true provided the event had not happened. Every person would be at hand to contradict me, and consequently it would be impossible that such an imposition could be put upon them against the direct evidence of their senses."

"Granted," replied the baron. "But this tale I am not too bold to infer might be invented when that generation had passed, when the credulity of coming ages might lead men to believe in such foolish and monstrous imaginings, like the labours of Hercules,

the amours of Jove, and the cannibal exploits of Saturn."

"Nay, but hear me. Whenever such a story was first promulged, were it then stated that not only public monuments remained to attest the event, but that public rites and ceremonies were kept up for its express commemoration, which rites were to that day continual, and to which those writings appealed as evidence attesting the performance of such miracles, then must the deceit have been rendered but the more glaring and easy of detection, as no such monuments could exist, no rites, no ceremonies demonstrating the truth of this appeal could be in observance. Thus, if I should now invent the tale about something done two thousand odd years ago, a few might, peradventure, be credulous enough to believe me; but if I were to say that ever after, even to this day, every male had his nose slit and his ears bored in memory of this event, it would be absolutely impossible that I should gain credit for my story, because the universality of the falsehood being manifest, and the attestation thereof visibly untrue, would prove the whole history to be false. Such were the rites and customs of the Jews."

"But still, rites and observances were practised by the heathen, which ceremonies ye acknowledge to have been false and impious, yet their followers worshipped and slid their neck into the yoke as readily as thy favourite Hebrews, who are proverbially rogues and cheats in the estimation even of infidels themselves."

"Aye, but impostors appeal not to facts, to eye-witnesses of some event, confirming and attesting the authority of their mission. Moses could not have persuaded half a million of persons that he had brought them through the Red Sea, fed them forty years with manna in the wilderness, and performed many other miracles during their journey, had not the facts been well known; and down to this day the rites and ceremonies of the Jews are, in consequence, linked to these

main facts as securely as though we ourselves had formed the first series of the chain, eye-witnesses to the miracles they attest. Again, the books of Moses expressly represent that they are the great history and transcript of the Jewish law, and speak of their being delivered by him and kept in the Ark from his time; likewise they are commanded to be read at stated periods, and to be taught from father to son throughout all generations, to the end that no imposition might be practised. In whatever age, therefore, after Moses, these forgeries were committed, it were impossible they should have been believed—everyone must have known they had not even heard of them aforetime, much less been taught all these burdensome precepts by their forefathers."

"Still the cunning and wily priests might have prepared men's minds for the discovery, having themselves deposited these writings in the Ark."

"A manifest impossibility, my lord, and for this plain reason: those writings profess to be a book of statutes, the standing law of the land, a code of ordinances by which the people had all along been governed. Could any person invent a body of statutes for this good realm of England, and make it pass upon the nation as the only book of laws which they had ever known or observed? Could any man, could any priest, or conspiracy of priests, have persuaded the Jews they had owned and obeyed these ordinances from the time of Moses, when they had not even so much as heard of them in times past?"

"These rites, it is most likely, having their origin in the simplest occurrences, might still have been practised prior to the forgeries; and these books, by allusions to them, deceived the nation, causing it to believe they were performed in memory of some miraculous events which never happened."

"What! Is it possible to persuade men they have kept laws which they have not even heard of? If I were to frame some idle story of things done a long while

ago, and say that our Sabbath was kept holy in commemoration of these events—this I think, my lord, will answer to the terms of your assertion. Suppose I made an attempt to persuade the people this day was kept holy in memory of Julius Cæsar or Mahomet, and that everybody had been circumcised or baptized in their names; that in the courts of judicature oaths had been taken on these very writings I had fabricated, and which, of necessity, they could not have seen prior to my attempt; and that these books likewise contained their laws and religion—ordinances which they had always acknowledged—is it possible, I ask, that such a cheat could for one moment have existed? An impostor would not have dared to make any such references, knowing they must inevitably have led to the rejection of his testimony."

"But surely if this great transaction, the passage of the Red Sea, had really happened, and in the way thou hast pointed out, the evidence would not have been suffered to rest solely on the frail and uncertain records to which thou hast referred. Books of laws, for instance, the writings of Mahomet, we know have been forged, as even thou wilt acknowledge."

"True, but those books refer not to miracles and the testimony of eye-witnesses, nor to laws and ordinances handed down from generation to generation, even to that time. That Mahomet pretended not to the working of miracles, he tells us in the Koran. The ridiculous legends related by his followers are rejected as spurious by the scholars and expounders of the prophet; and even his converse with the moon, his night journey from Mecca to Jerusalem, and from thence to heaven, were not performed before witnesses. The same may be said of the absurd exploits related of the heathen deities."

"But had not the heathen their priests, their public rites and sacrifices, equally with the Jews?"

"They had. But it was not even pretended that

these rites commenced at the time when the things which they commemorate were said to have happened. The Bacchanalia, for example, and other festivals, were established long after the fabulous events to which they refer. The priests of Juno and Venus were not appointed by those imaginary deities, but arose in some after age, and are therefore no evidence whatever to the truth of their worship."

"But where is thy proof in the unwritten evidence —monuments which cannot lie, bearing silent but convincing testimony to the truth of these miracles?"

"Twelve stones, it is said, were set up at Gilgal to commemorate the passage over Jordan."

"Aye, in thy book we read it."

"But mark the intention, to which no lying imposture durst have referred—to the end, it is written, that when the children of those who had witnessed this miracle, and their children's children, should ask their meaning, it should be told them. Now the miracle for which these stones were set up as a memorial by the eye-witnesses themselves, could not, as before proved, have been imposed upon the people at the time it happened, had it not really occurred."

"All this I can safely grant. Yet thou lackest wherewith to conclude thine argument."

"Bear with me, my lord, until I have made an end. Let us suppose, for one moment, there was no such miracle wrought as this same passage over Jordan."

"Which supposition of thine I do hold to be the truth as firmly as I believe your revelation is an imposture."

"And yet if it *should* be true, my lord?" The minister said this in a tone that made the listener start. He bit his lips. But the feeling had subsided, as, with a sharp and hurried accent, he exclaimed:

"Why this pause? I am prepared to listen."

"These stones," continued the divine, "were, of necessity, well known as public monuments existing at the time when these writings were first rehearsed

in the ears of all the people, because they are here referred to as testimonials of the event. But supposing them to have been set up on some unknown occasion, as you say, and that designing men in after ages invented the book of Joshua, affirming it was written at the time of that imaginary event by Joshua himself, adducing this pile of stones in evidence of its truth, what is the answer which everyone who heard it must have made to this witless falsehood? 'We know this pile of stones,' they would say, 'but of such an origin as thou hast related we have not heard, nor even of this book of Joshua. Where has it been concealed, and from whence was it brought forth? Besides, it solemnly inculcates that this miraculous event, our fathers' passage over Jordan, should be taught their children and children's children from that day forward, who were to be shown and carefully instructed as to the meaning and design of this very monument; but of this we have not so much as heard, nor has thy history been handed down to us from our forefathers. It is a lying testimony, therefore, and we cannot receive it.' Yet do we find the children of Israel commemorating, handing down, and instructing their children from age to age into the meaning and design of these memorials, which instruction must at some time or another have had a beginning, having its commencement with the very events to which they refer, which events it would then have been impossible to make the people believe against the plain evidence of their senses. Is the chain complete, my lord?"

"But what has all this to do with thy religion?—a system far different, methinks, from the primitive institutions of these remote ages."

"The self-same reasoning will apply, and in precisely the same mode, to the miracles of Our Lord and His apostles, together with their transmission by records from their times. The histories of the Old and New Testaments could not have been received at the time

they were written, if they had not been true, because the priesthoods of Levi and of Christ—the observance of the Sabbath, the passover, and circumcision—the ordinances of baptism and the eucharist, are there represented as descending by uninterrupted succession from the time of their respective institution. It would have been as impossible to persuade men in after ages that they had been circumcised or baptized, had celebrated passovers, and Sabbaths under the ministration of a certain order of priests, if it were not so, as to make them believe they had gone through the seas dryshod, seen the dead raised, and so forth. But without such a persuasion neither the law nor gospel could have been received."

"Yet, methinks, if I were the founder of a new religion, and had all the stores of Nature and Omnipotence at my command—those boasted attributes of thy Lawgiver—I would not have left it liable to doubt, to the sneers and cavils of anyone who might question my pretensions, or my right to control their belief. The truths of Omnipotence should be clear as the sun's beam, and unquestioned as His existence."

"'If they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither would they believe though one should rise from the dead.' 'Tis not for lack of proof; 'tis for lack of will. 'Tis not for lack of testimony, one tithe of which would have gained a ready assent to any of the drivelling absurdities of heathen mythology—'tis for lack of inclination; 'tis a wish that these revelations may not be true; and where the heart inclines, the judgment is easily biased."

"True, 'as the fool thinks.' The proverb is somewhat stale. I marvel thou findest not its application to thine own bias, perdie!"

"At any rate, if I am fooled, I am none the worse for my belief, if my creed be not true; but if man, as thou wouldest fain hope, is like the beasts that perish, I am still at quits with thee. And if this dream of thine

should prove but a dream, and thou shouldest awake—to the horrors of the pit, and the torments of the worm that dieth not!"

"Peace, thou croaker! I did not send for thee to prophesy, but to prove; I would break a lance and hold a tilt at thine argument. Now, I have a weapon in reserve which shall break down thy defences—the web of thy reasoning shall vanish. The fear of punishment, and the hope of future reward, held out as a bait to the cowardly and the selfish, shall be of no avail when the object of my research is accomplished. Hast thou not heard of the supreme elixir—the pabulum of life, which, if a man find, he may renew his years, and bid defiance alike to time and the destroyer? Then what will become of thy boasted system of opinions, begotten by priesthood and nurtured by folly?"

"And this phantasma, which man has never seen; which exists not upon the least shadow of evidence—which has not even the lowest dictates of sense and plausibility in its favour—on this *ignis fatuus*, eluding the grasp, and for ever mocking the folly of its pursuers, thou canst build thine hopes, because it flatters thy wishes and thy fears?"

"My fears!" said the Baron, rising: "and who speaks of my *fears*? I would chastise thee, thou insolent priest, wert thou not protected by the laws of courtesy."

"Yes, *thy* fears, Baron Monteagle," said this undaunted minister of the truth. "Thou wouldest not care to face thy lady's cousin! His blood yet crieth from the ground!"

"And who dares whisper, even to the walls, that I murdered John Harrington?" cried the astonished adept, trembling with ill-suppressed rage. "Methinks he holdeth his life too cheap who doth let this foul suspicion even rest upon his thoughts." He drew his sword as he spoke; but the minister stood undaunted, surveying his adversary with a look of pity.

"Put up thy sword. Thou hast enow of sins to repent

thee of without an old man's blood added to the number."

"How hast thou dared this insult? By my——"

"Nay, spare your oaths, my lord; they are better unspoken than unkept."

"Have I sent for thee to make sport? To gibe and taunt me even to my face?"

"I'll tell thee for what cause thou didst crave my presence," replied the other firmly. "Thou hast misgivings lest thine own hopes should not be true; lest thou shouldest perchance depart with a lie in thy right hand. Thou didst send for me, an unworthy minister to the faith which I profess, that by thy subtlety thou mightest deceive thyself; that by overthrowing my arguments thine own might be strengthened, for truly 'tis a comfortable thing to have our opinions confirmed through the weakness of an opponent."

"And darest thou, with such apprehensions upon thy stomach, to commit thyself alone to my mercy and my keeping? Suppose I should reward thee according to thine own base suspicions. Understandest thou me?"

"Yes, proud and guilty man, too well! But I fear thee not!"

"What! holdest thou a charmed life? Thou mayest fall into a broil as well as other men. And who shall require thy blood at my hands?"

"Ere I left," said the divine warily, "I whispered a word in your cousin Beaumont's ear. Should I not return, he will be here anon. Peradventure I am not misunderstood. Thou hadst need be careful of my life, otherwise thine own may be in jeopardy!"

A fierce and terrible brightness, like the lurid flashes from his own torment, burst from the other's eye. The anger and malice he strove to quell made it burn still hotter. His visage gathered blackness, cloud hurrying on cloud, like the grim billows of the storm across a glowing atmosphere. Rapid was the transition. Rage,

HORNBY CASTLE.

apprehension, abhorrence—all that hate and malignity could express, threw their appalling shadows over his features. Still the dark hints uttered by his visitor seemed to hold him in check. Chafed, maddened, yet not daring to execute the vengeance he desired, he strode through the apartment with an uneasy and perturbed gait. He paused at times, darting a look at the minister, as if about to address him. Suddenly he stood still, nerving his spirit to some awful question.

"My cousin John Harrington died in his own chamber. In this house, God wot. Thou didst shrive him at his last shift, and how sayest thou he was poisoned?"

"I said not aught so plainly; but thou hast spoken out. Behold him!—There!"—The divine pointed his finger slowly round the apartment. "Within a short space he cites thee to that bar where his presence will be a swift witness to thy doom!"

Had the spirit of the unfortunate heir of Hornby suddenly appeared, the Baron could not have followed the movement of the minister's hand with greater dismay and astonishment. The strong barrier of guilt seemed breaking down. Conscience aroused, as if at once the veil that concealed his iniquities had been withdrawn, they rose in all their unmitigated horror and enormity. An arrow, drawn at a venture, had pierced the jo nts of the harness. He stood powerless and without defence—motionless as the image of despair. By a strange coincidence a thick white cloud seemed to coil itself heavily round the room. Whether to the heated imaginations of the disputants this appearance might not present an image of the form then visible to their minds, it would be impossible to determine. Suffice it to say, the effect was memorable, from whatever cause it was produced.

An altered man was the Baron Monteagle. The arguments of this champion of the truth had in some measure prepared his mind for its reception. Under his ministrations he felt gradually more enlightened.

His terrors were calmed. Soon afterwards rose that noble structure, the chapel of Hornby, bearing on its front the following legend :

EDWARDUS STANLEY MILES, DNS. MONTEAGLE, ME FIERI FECIT.

It is recorded that Sir Edward Stanley, Baron Monteagle, died in the faith he had once despised ; and we trust he has found a place at the footstool of that Mercy whose interposition was not solicited in vain.

GEORGE MARSH, THE MARTYR

" Heavy persecution shall arise
Of all who in the worship persevere
Of spirit and truth."

Milton.

SMITHILLS or SMETHELLS HALL is situated in a wood, above a small glen, two miles and a half from Bolton. The court-gate exhibits nothing remarkable in its construction. On the left hand was the principal entrance, and a flight of stairs leading from the court. The glass casements, and greater part of the ancient front, have been removed, giving place to a more comfortable, if not a more pleasing style of architecture. The wainscot once displayed a profuse assemblage of ornaments, some of which now remain. Amongst them was formerly shown a likeness, said to be of King Egbert, though from what cause it should be assigned more particularly to that illustrious monarch, it would be difficult to conjecture.

In a room called the Green Chamber, it is said that George Marsh, the subject of the following history, was examined before Sir Roger Barton. In a passage near the door of the dining-room is a cavity in a flag, bearing some resemblance to the print of a man's foot, which is supposed to be the place where the holy martyr stamped, to confirm his testimony, and which is shown to this day as a memorial of his good confession.

The stone was once removed for a frolic by two or three young men who lived in the house. Taking advantage of their parents' absence, they cast it into the glen behind the hall. That same night, on retiring to rest, the inhabitants were disturbed by many strange and hideous noises. Much alarm and inquiry being excited, the offenders confessed, and the stone was restored to its place with

great reverence and solemnity. Some fragments that were broken off upon its removal were carefully replaced; after which, according to common report, the noises ceased.

Another story current in the neighbourhood is as follows:

About the latter end of the year 1732, one Saturday night, a stranger sleeping alone in the Green Chamber was much terrified by an apparition. He stated that about ten o'clock, as he was preparing for bed, there appeared a person before him dressed like a minister, in a white robe and bands, with a book in his hand. The stranger getting into bed, saw it stand by his bedside for a short time. It then slowly retired out of the door, as if going downstairs, and he saw it no more. This person invariably persisted in the same story; and the owner of the estate immediately ordered divine service at the chapel on a Sunday, which had long been discontinued.

The vaults seem to have been strongly walled and fortified, and were most probably used as burying-places, many bones having been found when digging. There is a tradition that King Egbert founded this place and kept his court here; but no corresponding trace of it occurs in history, and we may suppose, from the order of his conquests, that his residence would be in the more southern parts of the kingdom.

The situation is secluded, and well calculated for concealment, favouring the general opinion that it was the retreat of the famous pirate, Sir Andrew Barton, whose exploits and defeat are so beautifully told in the old ballad of that name in Percy's Reliques. It is surprising that so little should be known of this great and bold man, whose conduct had nearly occasioned a war between England and Scotland, and whose death, it is supposed, was one of the grievances which led to the battle of Flodden.

"Up to the time of Henry the Seventh, it appears, the Radcliffes were lords of Smethells; but Joan, daughter and sole heir of Sir Ralph Radcliffe, having married Robert Barton of Holme, he became in that reign seised of the manor and lordship, where his posterity continued, until Grace, sole daughter and heir of Thomas Barton, the last male heir, was married to Henry, eldest son of the first Lord Fauconberg, whose descendant Thomas, in the year

1721, sold the manor, which afterward passed into the hands of the Byrons of Manchester, by whom it was sold to Mr. Peter Ainsworth of Halliwell, a descendant of the Ainsworths of Pleasington, in this county,* the present owner.

"Smethells is dependent upon the superior manor of Sharples, the lord of which claims from the owner of this place a pair of gilt spurs annually; and, by a very singular and inconvenient custom, the unlimited use of the cellars at Smethells for a week in every year."†

At the close of a cold, keen day, about the early part of spring, in the year 1554, there came two men across a bleak and barren stretch of land called Dean Moor, near to Bolton-in-the-Moors. When at some distance from the main path, and far from the many by-roads intersecting this dreary common, they—first looking cautiously around, as though fearing intruders—fell on each other's neck and wept. The sun's light beamed suddenly through a cleft in the heavy clouds near the horizon, along the stunted grass and rushes, stretching far away to many a green knoll in the distance, behind which the dark hills and lowering sky looked in wild and terrific blackness over the scene. The sun, descending fast below the hills towards Blackrode, beamed forth as if to cast one short ray of gladness on the world of sorrow he was just quitting. Rivington Pike, and the dark chill moors stretching from it eastward, were bathed in a wide and stormy burst of light, like the wild and unnatural brightness that sometimes irradiates even the dim shadows of despair. A heavy mist lay at their feet, hiding most of the intermediate space from the eye of the observer, so that the long line of barren hills seemed to start out at once from a sea of vapour, like the grim barriers of some gigantic lake. The clouds were following hard upon the sun's flight, so that by the time he had disappeared the sky was covered with a dense and impervious curtain,

* Baines' "Lancashire," p. 540.
† Whitaker's "Whalley," p. 424.

rendered darker by the rapidity of the change. Chill and eddying gusts rustled over the dreary heath ; the voice of nature only responding to the chords of sadness and of sorrow. The hollow roar of the wind was like the moaning of a troubled ocean : a few big drops from the hurrying scud seemed to presage an approaching tempest.

The two friends had crept behind a stone wall, built up in a hollow by a stagnant pool, taking but little heed of the darkness and the storm, so intent were they upon the subject which engrossed their thoughts.

" I might flee, Ralph, but it would straightway be said, not that I had left my country and my kin alone, but rather that I had deserted the faith and doctrine I profess, after having unworthily ministered hereabout for a season, which might be an occasion of much scandal, a weakening of the faith of my poor flock, and a grievous discouragement to those that remain."

" ' A living dog is better than a dead lion,' says the wise man. Besides, it is a presuming on His providence, when He opens a way for our escape, and we, of our own wilfulness and folly, neglect the blessing. ' Do thyself no harm.' Provide for thine own life, and run not as the horse and mule, that have no understanding, into the very throat of thine enemies, and them that seek thine hurt."

The first speaker was a man of plain but comely appearance, habited in a coarse doublet buckled about the waist with a leathern girdle. A round woollen cap, from beneath which a few straight-combed locks hung about his face, gave a quaint and precise aspect to his figure. His features, though slightly wrinkled, did not betoken either age or infirmity : but his whole appearance indicated a robust and vigorous frame, capable both of exertion and endurance. The other individual exhibited a more ungainly form and deportment. He had not the same look of benevolence and good-will to man which irradiated the features of the

first, of whom it might be truly said, that his inward affections did mould and constrain his outward image into their resemblance, so that meekness and benignity shone through his countenance from the ever-glowing spirit of love and Christian charity within. There was a sharp and shrewd intelligence in the eye of the latter speaker which showed that some considerations of selfish and worldly wisdom might, by possibility, mingle with his unerring notions of duty. Yet was he a man of great piety and worth, and well fitted as a counsellor in times of peril and distress.

"Ralph Bradshaw," replied the other, "thou hast been my tried friend and my stay in this waste and howling wilderness, and I have found thy counsel hitherto wholesome and pleasant; but," continued Marsh, with a heavy sigh, "I have not told thee how Sir Roger Barton's servants have made diligent search for me in Bolton, and have given strict charge to my brother Robert that he should, by to-morrow at the latest, appear with me at Smethells, else shall he and my poor mother answer before him at their peril. By God's grace, I would not leave these weaklings of the flock to suffer for my sake."

"Leave this matter until thou depart; I will devise some means for their relief. I would not have thy life needlessly put in hazard, seeing how few men have been raised up like unto thyself, privileged as thou art to minister the bread of life to the hungry and famishing poor in this barren corner of God's spiritual vineyard."

"And yet," replied Marsh, "I ought with all boldness to confess the truth, fearing not to answer for the hope that is in me; and why should I refuse to obey the commands of those who are in authority? For the magistrate beareth not the sword in vain."

"Truly, obedience were his right, if so be this were some righteous judge raised up of God for the punishment of evil-doers. But, as thou well knowest, the justice thou shalt demand will not be rendered: the

summons thou hast received to answer on doctrinal and disputed points, and to argue them before these wicked and crafty men, as touching thy belief, are but manifest excuses to get thee into their power, from which they mean not to liberate thee but by the fire that shall consume thy body, and free it for ever from their murderous gripe. Thou knowest, too, that Sir Roger beareth thee a malice, and hath used all subtlety that he might have wherewith to seek occasion against thee. Didst thou not rebuke him openly for his irreverence, when that he must needs play with his puppy, that had its collar full of bells, during God's holy service—that comfortable form of worship established and publicly taught in the lifetime of our last good King Edward, and not this papistical, idolatrous Mass which they now use, to the eternal ruin of both soul and body? No mercy shalt thou have at their hands. And doth our blessed Master require of us that we give our bodies up to these wicked and malignant deceivers, that their devilish pleasure may be glutted in torturing and spitefully using us, while they go about putting innocent men to cruel and shameful deaths? As soon would He require that we should yield our bodies up to Satan and his angels."

"I know not how to answer thee, Bradshaw, in this matter; but my mind misgives me in taking so hasty a departure from our suffering and afflicted realm. Yet will we ask counsel of Him who guideth the weak, and will not suffer us to be tempted beyond measure."

Whereat these persecuted disciples did unite in prayer to that throne before which, having finished their earthly warfare, they now stand with crowns of victory on their foreheads, purified from this gross mortality. Marsh, much comforted by the exercise, doubted not that, according to his faith, wisdom and direction would be granted in the way he should take.

Hereupon they separated, wishing each other "God speed."

Through the darkness and tempest of that fearful night George Marsh approached the town, where, in a narrow lane leading from the brow of the hill by the church, abode his mother and her youngest son. Raising the latch, he saw the old woman alone, seated by the fire, weeping.

"Praised be His mercy, thou art yet safe!" said she, clasping her withered hands together. "They have again been here to seek for thee, and I was fearful thou hadst not escaped their power."

"Who has been here, and from whence?"

"Divers of Justice Barton's servants were here again, not an hour ago, who have charged thy brother Robert and thy cousin William Marsh to seek for thee, and by to-morrow, ere noon, to render thee up at Smethells. They are now gone to Atherton, and elsewhere, for aught I know."

"Then, may I not tarry here to-night?"

"Nay, I beseech thee, flee for thy life. In tarrying here shalt thou not escape; for a man's enemies are now truly those of his own household."

Marsh, after a pause, determined to listen to her advice, and departed.

Cold and weary, he retraced his steps, going beyond Dean Church, where, at a friend's house, he stayed for the night, "taking ill rest," as he quaintly expresses it in his journal, "and consulting much with myself of my trouble." He expected, or at least hoped, that some intimation would be vouchsafed from his Master as touching the way he should pursue, but none was granted; and he lay there, full of tossing and unquiet, the greater part of the night. On the following morning, at his first awaking, which was early, being still in heaviness, and not knowing what to do, came another friend to his bedside, who advised him that he should in no wise depart, but abide boldly, and confess the faith. At these words he felt so convinced, and, as it were, suddenly established in his conscience, that he doubted

not, as he says, but the message was from God. He thenceforth consulted not with flesh and blood, but resolved on immediately presenting himself before his persecutors, and patiently bearing such cross as it might please Heaven to lay upon him.

He arose betimes, and as his custom was, recited the English Litany, with other prayers, kneeling by his bedside, after which he prepared to go towards Smethells, calling, as he went, at the dwellings of several whom he knew, desiring them to pray for him, to commend him to all his friends, and to comfort his mother and his little children, for, as he then said, he felt assured that they should not see his face any more. Taking leave, with many tears and much sorrow of heart, he came nigh to the residence of Sir Roger Barton, a bigoted persecutor, and an avowed enemy of the reformed Church.

It was about nine o'clock, on a cold and bitter morning, when he came in sight of the court-gate. Then surrounded with trees, the mansion itself was not visible but within a short distance. This house, now ancient and decayed, then existed in all its pomp and magnificence, having only been erected, as tradition informs us, some fifty years before, by Sir Andrew Barton, a famous pirate or free rover, who was knighted by James III of Scotland for his great bravery. In the third year of Henry the Eighth, with two stout vessels called the *Lion* and the *Jenny Perwin*, he considerably interrupted the navigation on the English coasts. His pretence was letters of reprisals granted him against the Portuguese by James III. Under colour of this grant, he took ships of all nations, alleging that they had Portuguese goods on board. Complaint being made to the Privy Council of England, the Earl of Surrey said "The narrow seas should not be infested while he had estate enough to furnish a ship, or a son capable of commanding it." Upon this, two ships were immediately fitted out, and commanded by Sir Thomas and

Sir Edward Howard, sons to the Earl of Surrey, at their own expense, when, having been some days at sea, they were separated by a storm, which gave Sir Thomas Howard an opportunity of coming up with Sir Andrew Barton in the *Lion*, whom he immediately engaged. The fight was long and doubtful, for Barton, being an experienced seaman, and having under him a determined crew, made a desperate defence, himself cheering them with a boatswain's whistle to his last breath. The loss of their commander, however, caused them to submit, on which they received fair quarter and good usage. In the meantime, Sir Edward attacked and captured the *Jenny Perwin*, after an obstinate resistance. Both these ships, with as many of their crew as were left alive, about one hundred and fifty, were brought into the river Thames, on the 2nd August 1511, as trophies of the victory. The prisoners were sent to the Archbishop of York's palace, now Whitehall, where they remained for some time, but were afterwards dismissed and sent into Scotland.

James the Fourth having then ascended the Scottish throne, after the murder of his predecessor, exceedingly resented this action, and instantly sent ambassadors to Henry demanding satisfaction, on which the King gave this memorable answer, "That the punishment of pirates was never held a breach of peace among princes." King James, however, was still dissatisfied, and from that time was never thoroughly reconciled to the English nation.

Sir Andrew was descended from a good family in Scotland, and adopted a seafaring life when very young. A motive of concealment might be the cause of his erecting a mansion here, the roads being then almost impassable; and the extensive woods, which lay in almost every direction from this spot, together with its great distance from the sea-side, might be additional recommendations in its favour. An opinion exists, though now involved in much doubt and obscurity, that

his immediate descendant was the Sir Roger Barton whom we have already named, and unto whom this pious servant of the truth was about to commit himself.

On venturing through the gate, Marsh observed several men standing by a door on the left hand, being the principal entrance.

"What, ho!" said one, "art come to morning prayers?"

"Nay," replied another, "his cap cleaves to a heretic's sconce."

"'Tis Marsh," said the foremost of the group, who proved to be Roger Wrinstone, the knight's prime minister, constable, and entrapper of heretics. "Now, by my faith," he continued, "if this wily fox do not think, by his coming, to take Justice by the nose, and outface her through his impudence. But he will be sore mistaken if he think to outwit our master by his cunning. Good friend, thy business?" said Wrinstone, cap in hand, addressing the minister scornfully, and thrusting his tongue into his cheek, to the great diversion of his companions, who, with shouts of laughter, began to ape the buffoonery of their leader.

"I would fain speak with the Justice," said the stranger meekly.

"And suppose I were he," said Wrinstone, putting himself into an attitude of great authority and importance, setting out his paunch, at the same time, something like unto the knight himself. Another laugh, or rather titter, went through the courtyard at this exploit; a suspicious glance, however, was directed towards the casement above, some apprehensions evidently existing lest Sir Roger should have been eye-witness to the ceremony.

"Roger Wrinstone, thy mocking is ill-timed," said Marsh, with a severe and steadfast gaze, which seemed to awe even this unblushing minion of intolerance. "If thy master be not arisen, I will tarry awhile his worship's leisure."

" Sir Roger is with his priest at confession," said one, with a shout of derision. " Art come to confess him too, Father Marsh ? " and with that they plucked him by the beard, mocking and ill-treating him. But, filled with joy that he was accounted worthy to suffer, he passed from them into the great hall, at that period a large and lofty room, which, as tradition reports, would have " dined all the monarchs of Europe, and all their trains." It has since been much curtailed of its proportions, modern improvements having appropriated it to more useful purposes. The wainscots were enriched with choice and beautiful carvings, representing bucks' heads, flowers, and portraits of the most distinguished ancestors of the family. So numerous and varied were these ornaments, that, it is commonly reported, the artist wrought out his apprenticeship in executing this grand work, which for minuteness and the astonishing number and ingenuity of the devices, perhaps exceeded most of the like nature throughout the realm. Amongst other whimsical fancies was a ton crossed with a bar, having the ciphers A and B above and below, which worthless and absurd pun, a sort of emblematic wit much cultivated by our forefathers, indicated the name of the founder, Sir Andrew Barton.

Marsh, on his first entrance, inquired of a servitor if the Justice might be spoken with. The menial was bearing off the remains of a substantial breakfast, and having a flagon of beer at hand, invited the stranger to a hearty draught, saying that he looked tired and in need of refreshment ; but he meekly put it aside, with due courtesy, still standing as he repeated his question. The man departed to make the inquiry, when presently followed the constable and his gang, who, seeing that the hall was cleared, strode in, rudely seizing Marsh by the shoulder.

" Thou art my prisoner," said Wrinstone ; " I arrest thee in the Queen's name."

At this moment came running in a little girl, bounding

and frolicsome as a young fawn from its covert, who, hearing the word prisoner, and seeing a man of such a prepossessing and benign aspect in custody, immediately came up to Wrinstone, and laid hold of the skirts of his doublet, saying—

"You shan't, Wrinstone. If he has done amiss, let him go, and I'll give thee some plums out of my Midlent pasty."

The meekness and peaceable demeanour of this unoffending servant of the Church had in a moment won the heart of the child, and she pulled him by the hand, as if to convey him from the grasp of his persecutor.

"May Heaven bless thee, my child, and make thee a blessing!" He lifted up his eyes while he thus spake. "Thy nature hath not yet learnt the cruel disposition of these tormentors."

It is said that his prayer was heard; and a passage in the subsequent history of this little girl may, in all likelihood, find a place in another series of our Traditions.

A tear for the first time trembled in the poor man's eye as he looked on this tender and compassionate babe. He thought upon his own sufferings, and the hard fate of his own little ones. But he soon repressed the rising murmur, calmly awaiting the result.

The child still clung to him; nor would she depart, though threatened with Sir Roger's displeasure by his deputy. Indeed, she cared little for the issue, being fully indulged in all her caprices by the knight, her grandfather, who was mightily entertained with her humours. But threats and cajolements failing in their effect, they were glad to let this wilful creature accompany them to the presence of Sir Roger as the dispenser of justice, or rather of his own vindictive will; and to his private chamber they were shortly summoned.

Now, this distinguished knight was heavy and well fed, and of a rich and rubicund countenance. From over-indulgence he had become unwieldy, being propped up in a well-stuffed chair, one leg resting on a low stool,

his whole frame bloated by indolence and sensuality. He was short-necked and full-chested. His eyes, grey and fiery, were almost starting from his head, by reason of some obstruction to the free current of the blood in that direction. This was accompanied by a wheezing and plethoric cough, which oft troubled him. At his side sat a priest, who had a fair smooth face, and a shining head sprinkled over with a few pale-coloured locks close-cut and combed back with becoming care from his temples. His eyes were small and restless, scarcely for an instant keeping to one position. He seemed to pay a silent deference to his patron, allowing Sir Roger to begin the examination as follows :

" So thy relatives have ferreted thee forth at last. Nothing like making their kindred in some sort answer for the bodies of these heretics."

" I came of my own free consent, and alone, your worship," replied Marsh ; " and hope to be honestly dealt with. If I have offended the laws, I am here to answer ; if not, I claim your protection."

" Peace ! Will none o' ye stop that fellow's prating ? Justice thou shalt have, and that speedily, as thou sayest, but not in the way thou couldst desire. Look thee ! " He fumbled in his pouch as he spake. Drawing out a letter, he continued—" My Lord Derby hath commanded that thou be sent to Lathom along with some others who do mightily trouble us, and sow evil seed and dissension among the people."

" This, please your grace, I deny ; and I would know mine accusers, and what they allege against me."

" Now this is a brave answer, truly," replied the Justice. " These rogues be all of one tale, pretending that they have done nothing amiss, and desiring to know, poor innocents ! of what they are accused, as though they were ignorant of their own lives and conversation hitherto. Tush ! it were a needless and an unthrifty throwing out of words to argue the matter—for they are wiser in their own eyes than seven men who can

render a reason. Do thou question him, and urge him to the test," said Sir Roger, turning to his conscience-keeper.

"What art thou?" said the priest, leaning forward for the purpose of a more strict examination.

"I am a minister," said Marsh. "It is but a short time agone since I served a cure hereabouts."

"Who gave thee orders? Or hast thou indeed received any?"

"The Bishops of London and Lincoln, after that I had diligently studied and kept terms aforetime at Cambridge."

"Humph!" said Sir Roger. "These bishops be of the reformed sect; and I have a notion, will some day or another answer for it before the Queen's council."

"What knowledge hast thou of these men?"

"I never saw them but at the time I received ordination."

After a few more questions of little moment, the priest threw out the usual net with which his fraternity were wont to entangle those of heretical opinions.*

"What is thy belief respecting the sacrament?"

* "The common net at that time," says Sir Richard Baker, "for catching of Protestants was the real presence; and this net was used to catch the Lady Elizabeth. That princess showed great prudence in concealing her sentiments of religion, in complying with the present modes of worship, and in eluding all questions with regard to a subject so momentous. Being asked at one time, what she thought of the words of Christ, '*This is my Body*,'—whether she thought it the true body of Christ that was in the sacrament,—it is said that after some pausing she thus answered:—

> "'Christ was the Word that spake it,
> He took the bread and brake it;
> And what the Word did make it,
> That I believe, and take it';

which, though it may seem but a slight expression, yet hath in it more solidness than at first sight appears; at least, it served her turn at that time to escape the nets, which by a direct answer she could not have done."—Baker's *Chronicle*, p. 320.

"That is a question of too general and multifarious a nature for a plain and faithful answer."

"Are the bread and wine, by virtue of the words pronounced by the priest, changed into the body and blood of Christ? And is the sacrament, whether reserved or received, the very body and blood of Christ?"

"I am not careful to answer such inquiries, seeing that I am but unskilled and unlearned in scholastic disputes. Why do ye ask me these hard and unprofitable questions, to bring my body in danger of death, and to suck my blood?"

"We are not blood-suckers, and intend none other than to make thee a better man and a good Christian," said the priest, mightily offended. Whereat Roger Wrinstone, in his great zeal and affection for the Holy Church, smote Marsh a lusty blow on the mouth, saying:

"Answerest thou the priest so? By your worship's leave, I will mend his ill manners."

The little girl at this rebuke fell a-crying, and her grief became so loud that Sir Roger was fain to pacify her by ordering Wrinstone to stand farther apart. With red and glistening eyes she looked up and smiled at the suffering martyr, who, remembering his own dear babes, could scarce refrain from embracing her as she clung about him, to the great displeasure of Sir Roger.

"Answer this reverend and spiritual admonisher, to the true purport and bearing of his question," said Sir Roger, with a mighty affectation of sagacity.

"I do believe Christ to be present with His sacrament, inasmuch as He is alway with His people to the end of time. But as I am not skilful in matters of such nicety, I would ask of this reverend casuist, who is more able to answer in questions of such weight than I, who am, as I said before, unlearned in disputed points; and truly I am in nothing more wishful than to come at a right knowledge and understanding of the truth."

"Say on," said the priest, something flattered by this modest appeal to his opinion.

"Our Lord took the cup and blessed it, of which He then drank, and afterwards His disciples?"

"Yes. But this doth not sanction its being sent round to the laity," replied the priest, not aware of the drift and true bearing of the enquiry.

"Then He took the bread and brake, and did eat likewise with His disciples?"

"Of a truth," replied the unwary disputant. "For these questions need but a plain and simple answer."

"Then," said Marsh, "of a surety He must have ate and drank Himself!—Nay," continued he, seeing the priest turn pale with rage and vexation, "I can find none other alternative. For, unlearned and unpractised as I am, the absurdity of your belief is manifest."

"Thou art a child of perdition—an impious and pestilent heretic! Thou eatest and drinkest damnation to thyself; and the Holy Church consigns all such to the flames, and to the fire of eternal wrath hereafter!" roared the infuriate priest, whose choler waxed hotter in proportion as he felt unable to withstand the conclusion of his opponent.

"For," as it has been observed, even by some of the most enlightened Catholics themselves,* "theological animosity, so far from being an argument of men's conviction in their opposite sects, is a certain proof that they have never reached any serious persuasion with regard to these sublime subjects. Even those who are most impatient of contradiction in other controversies, are mild and moderate in comparison of polemical divines; and whenever a man's knowledge and experience give him a perfect assurance in his own opinion, he regards with contempt rather than anger the opposition and mistakes of others. But while men zealously maintain what they neither clearly compre-

* Cardinal Pole and others.

hend nor entirely believe, they are shaken in their imagined faith by the opposite persuasion, or even doubts of other men, and vent on their antagonists that anger and impatience which is the natural result of this state of the understanding."

"Master," cried Wrinstone, "shall I fetch the bridle that we so oft use for scolds and ill women?"

"Aye, do, prithee run, Roger," said the child, hastily, and looking towards him, "for my grandfather's priest is like to need it soon."

At this the worthy professor of Christian charity and goodwill, darting a furious look at the girl, exclaimed—

"Sir Roger, beware lest this viper thou art hatching be suffered to sting us. Look to it! This minion of thine is not too young either to work mischief or to escape its punishment!"

Whereupon Sir Roger, mightily afraid of his spiritual guide and granter of indulgences, rebuked the offending little one and ordered her out of the room. With some difficulty this command was executed; but the disturbance at the door became so loud, that they were fain again to admit her, upon a sullen promise that she would behave in a more reverent manner to the priest, and refrain from interruption.

"Answer me no more with thy deep and devilish subtlety," continued this champion of the Catholic faith; "for of a truth the devil doth wonderfully aid and abet ye in all disputes touching this holy sacrament; but show me thy belief in regard to so wholesome and comfortable a doctrine."

"I have answered before, as far as my weak understanding will permit, and by God's grace I will not swerve from my profession. A doctrine pushed to an absurdity is its own refutation."

Then spake one that was standing by, but who had hitherto taken no part in the debate.

"Truly 'tis a pity that one so proper and well gifted, and who might doubtless gain some profitable appoint-

ment, should so foolishly cast himself away by holding these dangerous and heretical opinions. Thou wilt bring both body and soul into jeopardy thereby. If not for thyself, yet for thy children's sake, and for thy kindred, who must needs suffer from thy contumacy, return to the communion from which thou hast cast thyself out, and to the arms of that compassionate mother who is ever ready to receive back her erring but repentant children."

"Verily," replied the martyr, "life, children, brethren, and friends, with all the other delights and comforts of this present state, are as dear and sweet unto me as unto any other man, and I would be as loath to lose them if I might hold them with a good conscience. But seeing I cannot do that, I trust God will strengthen me with His Holy Spirit so that I may lose all for His sake. For I now hold myself but as a sheep appointed to be slain, and patiently to suffer whatsoever cross it may please my most merciful Father to lay upon me. But, as God is my witness!"—he seemed to speak with a prophetic denunciation,—"from these vile ashes shall a fire-brand come that shall consume and destroy utterly these bloody men and persecutors of God's inheritance!"

So astonished were the bystanders at his audacity, that they did not so much as attempt to stay his tongue or to lay hands upon him, whilst he continued, raising his arm in a threatening attitude—

"Ye killers of the prophets, and destroyers of them whom God hath sent unto you!—Because we reproach you with your evil deeds, and"—

"Blasphemy?" cried out Sir Roger, who was the first to recover his speech: "we will have thy tongue bored for its offence."

"Away with him!" cried the priest, who seemed nothing loath to begin his torments. "Thou shalt to my Lord Derby, and he will know how to deal with such a bitter and foul-mouthed heretic."

All was uproar and confusion. The Justice was even

moved from his chair, and swore out lustily that by ten o'clock the day following, unless this blasphemer were delivered at Lathom, he would imprison the whole family of them: such a pestilent fellow being fit, as he said, to infect all the parish with the plague of heresy.

Roger Wrinstone and his crew were preparing to drag him downstairs; but the Justice, hobbling on his crutch, preceded them, leaning on the arm of his priest. The party, on their entrance into the hall, found Marsh's two kinsmen awaiting the event. They soon found that no favour was intended.

"See to it, knaves," bellowed the knight, "that this fellow is delivered up to my lord at Lathom by to-morrow, or your own carcases shall answer for his."

Then did these poor men pray and beseech their kinsman that he would in some wise conform to the religion of his superiors, or find some way of escape from a cruel and ignominious death.

But Marsh, standing steadfast before them all, cried out with a loud voice—

"Between me and them let God witness!" Looking up to heaven, he exclaimed, as if with a sudden inspiration—"If my cause be just, let this prayer of Thine unworthy servant be heard!"

He stamped violently with his foot, and the impression of it, as the general notion is, yet remains, to attest the purity of his cause and the cruelty and injustice of his persecutors.

To this day may be seen the print of a man's foot in the stone, which by many is believed to exist as a memorial of this good confession.

In shape it is much like that of a human foot, except its being rather longer than common. In that part where the sole may have rested is a small dent, as though a man had stamped vehemently on the soft earth, and the weight of his body had borne principally on that place. The impression is of a dark-brown or rather

reddish hue, and is very perceptible when damp or moistened by cleaning.

Marsh's subsequent history is soon told. From Lathom, where he was examined before Lord Derby and his council, and found guilty of heretical opinions, he was committed at Lancaster, and from thence to the ecclesiastical court at Chester, where, after several examinations before Dr. Cotes, then bishop of this diocese, he was adjudged to the stake, and burnt in pursuance of his sentence, at the place of public execution near that city, on the 24th April, 1555.

DR. DEE, THE ASTROLOGER

"Dark was the vaulted room of gramarye
To which the wizard let the gallant knight,
Save that before a mirror huge and high
A hallowed taper shed a glimmering light
On mystic implements of magic might;
On cross, and character, and talisman,
And almagest and altar, nothing bright;
For fitful was the lustre pale and wan,
As watch-light by the bed of some departing man."

Lay of the Last Minstrel.

THE character of DEE, our English "Faust," as he is not inaptly called, has both been misrepresented and misunderstood. An enthusiast he undoubtedly was, but not the drivelling dotard that some of his biographers imagine. A man of profound learning, distinguished for attainments far beyond the general range of his contemporaries, he, like Faustus, and the wisest of human kind, had found out how little he knew; had perceived that the great ocean of truth yet lay unexplored before him. Pursuing his inquiries to the bound and limit as he thought, of human knowledge, and finding it altogether "vanity," he had recourse to forbidden practices, to experiments through which the occult and hidden qualities of nature and spirit should be unveiled and subdued to his own will.

Evidently prompted to unhallowed intercourse by pride and ambition, he deluded himself with the vain and wicked hope that the God who spurned his impious requests would vouchsafe to him a new and peculiar revelation. He would not bow to the plain and humbling tenets already revealed, but sought another "sign"—a miraculous testimony to himself alone. Fancying that he was intrusted with a divine mission, he was given up to strong delusions that he should believe a lie. He aimed at universal knowledge and exhaustless riches; but he died imbecile and a beggar!

That he was deceived by Kelly, there is no doubt, and that he was sincere, at least in seeking his own promotion and aggrandisement, is equally certain; but we would rescue his character from the ridicule with which it has been invested. His grasp was greater than his power, and he fell, like heroes and conquerors in all ages, unable to execute, and overwhelmed with the vastness of his own conceptions.

John Dee was born July 13, 1527, in London. His parents were in good circumstances. At an early age (fifteen years) he studied at St. John's College, Cambridge. His application was intense. For three years, by his own account, he only slept four hours every night. Two hours were allowed for meals and recreation, and the rest was spent in learning and devotion. Five years afterwards he went into the Low Countries, for the purpose of conversing with Frisius, Mercator, and others. Returning to Cambridge, he was chosen a fellow of Trinity College, then founded by Henry the Eighth. His reputation stood very high, and his astronomical pursuits, in those days generally connected with astrology, drew upon him the imputation of being a conjurer, which character clung to him through life. This opinion was much strengthened by an accident which, he says, happened soon after his removal from St. John's College, and his being chosen a fellow of Trinity. "Hereupon," he continues, "I did set forth a Greek comedy of Aristophanes, named in Greek Ειρηνη, with the performance of the Scarabæus, or beetle—his flying up to Jupiter's palace with a man and his basket of victuals on her back; whereat was great wondering, and many vain reports spread abroad of the means how that was effected."

He left England again soon afterwards, distinguishing himself at several foreign universities, and attracting the notice of many persons of high rank, amongst whom were the Duke of Mantua and Don Lewis de la Cerda (afterwards Duke of Medina Celi). In 1551 he returned to England, being well received by King Edward and his court. A pension of one hundred crowns per annum was granted him, which he afterwards exchanged for the rectory of Upton-upon-Severn.

In Queen Mary's reign he was accused of some correspondence with the Lady Elizabeth's servants, and of

practising against the Queen's life by enchantments. He was seized and confined, but acquitted of the charge. He was then turned over to Bonner, to see if heresy might not be found in him. After a tedious prosecution he was set at liberty, August 19, 1555, by an order of the council.

Upon Queen Elizabeth's accession he was consulted as to a fit day for the coronation, and received many splendid promises of preferment, which were never realized.

In the spring of the year 1564, he made another journey abroad, when he presented to the Emperor Maximilian his book, entitled "Monas Hieroglyphica," printed at Antwerp the same year. He returned to England in the summer, producing several learned works, which showed his extraordinary skill in the mathematics.

In 1571 he went to Lorraine, where, falling very ill, he was honoured with the solicitude of the Queen, who sent two of her physicians, and gave him many other proofs of her regard. Upon his return to England he now settled himself in his own house at Mortlake in Surrey, where he collected a noble library, and prosecuted his studies with great diligence. His collection is said to have consisted of more than four thousand books, nearly a fourth part of them manuscripts, which were afterwards dispersed and lost. This library, and a great number of mathematical and mechanical instruments, were destroyed by the fury of the populace in 1583, who, believing him to be a conjurer and one that dealt with the devil, broke into his house, and tore and destroyed the fruit of his labours during the forty years preceding.

On the 16th March, 1575, Queen Elizabeth, attended by many of her court, visited Dr. Dee's house to see his library; but having buried his wife only a few hours before, he could not entertain her Majesty in the way he wished. However, he brought out a glass, the properties of which he explained to his royal mistress, hoping to wipe off the aspersion, under which he had long laboured, of being a magician.

In 1578 her Majesty being indisposed, Dee was sent abroad to consult with some German physicians about the nature of her complaint. But that part of his life in which he was most known to the world commenced in 1581, when his intercourse began with Edward Kelly.

This man pretended to instruct him how to obtain, by means of certain invocations, an intercourse with spirits. Soon afterwards there came to England a Polish lord, Albert Laski, palatine of Siradia, a person of great learning. He was introduced to Dee by the Earl of Leicester, who was now the doctor's chief patron. Becoming acquainted, Laski prevailed with Dee and Kelly to accompany him to his own country. They went privately from Mortlake, embarking for Holland, from whence they travelled by land through Germany into Poland. On the 3rd February, 1584, they arrived at the castle of their patron, where they remained for some time.

They afterwards visited the Emperor Rodolphe at Prague. On the 17th April, 1585, Laski introduced them to Stephen, King of Poland, at Cracow; but, this prince treating them very coolly, they returned to the emperor's court at Prague, from whence they were banished at the instigation of the Pope's nuncio who represented them as magicians.

The doctor and his companion afterwards found an asylum in the Castle of Trebona, belonging to Count William of Rosenberg, where they lived in great splendour for a considerable time. It was said that Kelly had succeeded in procuring the powder of projection, by which they were furnished with money in profusion; but on referring to the doctor's diary, we find the miserable tricks and shifts they resorted to for the purpose of keeping up appearances. Kelly, however, it seems, learned many secrets from the German chemists, which he did not communicate to his patron; and the heart-burnings and jealousies that arose between them at length ended in an absolute rupture.

The fame of their adventures was noised through Europe and Elizabeth, in consequence, invited Dee home. He was now separated from Kelly, and on the 1st May, 1589, he set out on his return to England. He travelled with great pomp, was attended by a guard of horse, and besides waggons for his goods had no fewer than three coaches for the use of his family. He landed at Gravesend on the 23rd of November, and on the 9th of December was graciously received at Richmond by the Queen. He found

his house at Mortlake had been pillaged, but he collected the scattered remains of his library, and was so successful by the assistance of his friends as to recover about three-fourths of his books, estimating his loss at about £400. He had many friends, and received great presents, but was always craving and in want. The Queen sent him money from time to time, promising him two hundred angels at Christmas. One-half he received, but he gave a broad hint that the Queen and himself were defrauded of the rest. He now resolved to apply for some settled subsistence, and sent a memorial by the Countess of Warwick to her Majesty, earnestly requesting that commissioners might be appointed to hear his pretensions and decide upon his claims. Two commissioners were accordingly sent to Mortlake, where Dee showed them a book containing a distinct account of all the memorable transactions of his life, except those which occurred in his last journey abroad. He detailed to them the injuries, damages, and indignities which he had suffered, and humbly supplicated reparation at their hands. The Queen, in consequence, sent a hundred marks to Mrs. Dee, and promises to her husband. At length, on December 8th, 1594, he obtained a grant of the chancellorship of St Paul's. But this did not answer his expectations, upon which he applied to Whitgift, Archbishop of Canterbury, giving an account of all the books he had either written or published.

This, with other applications, led to his being presented with the wardenship of Manchester College, vacant by the removal of Dr. William Chaderton to the see of Chester. On the 14th of February, 1596, he arrived with his family in that town, and on the 20th he was installed in his new charge. He continued here about seven years, passing his time in a very turbulent and unquiet manner. On the 5th of June, 1604, he presented a petition to King James, earnestly desiring that he might be brought to trial and delivered, by a judicial sentence, from those suspicions which his astrological and other inquiries had brought upon him. But the King, knowing the nature of his studies, was very far from showing him any mark of his favour. In November, the same year, he quitted Manchester, returning to his house at Mortlake, where he died

old, infirm, and forsaken of his friends, being very often obliged to sell some book or other to procure a dinner. The following account of Dr. Dee's expenses from Trebona to London, copied from a statement in his own handwriting,* we have thought too curious to omit :—

"The charges of my last return from beyond seas, A. 1589, being favourably called home by her Majestie from Trebon Castle in Bohemia.

"My journey of remove homeward from Trebon Castle to Staden cost me more than 3,000 dollars, which we account . . . . . 600 lib.

"Besides the cost of 15 horses wherewith I travelled all that journey; of which the 12 which drew my 3 coaches were very good and young Hungarian horses, and the other three were Wallachies for the saddles : which 15 cost with one another . . . . . 120 lib.

"The three new coaches made purposely for my aforesaid journey, with the furniture for the 12 coach-horses, and with the saddles and bridles for the rest, cost more than 3 score pounds . . . . . 60 lib.

"The charge of wains to carry my goods from Trebon to Staden, they being two and sometimes three (for more easy and light passage in some places), cost above an hundred and ten pounds, which I account (for an hundred of it) under my former sum of 600 lib. Under which 600 lib. also I do account for the charges of the 24 soldiers, well appointed, which, by virtue of the emperor's passport, I took up in my way from Diepholt, and again from Oldenburgh; the charges of the six harquebusiers and musqueteers, which the Earl of Oldenburgh lent me out of his own garrison there : I gave to one with another a dollar a man for the day, and their meat and drink full. For at the first, 18 enemies, horsemen well appointed, from Lingen and Wilstrusen, had lain five

* "Johan Glaston," vol. ii. fol. 535.

days attending thereabout, to have sett upon me and mine; and at Oldeborch, a Scot (one of the garrison) gave me warning of an ill-minded company lying and hovering for me in the way which I was to pass, as by a letter may appear here present. Of the former danger, the Landgrave of Hesse his letters unto me may give some evidence.

"The charges of the four Swart Ruiters, very well mounted, and appointed to attend on me at Staden, from Breme, being honourably and very carefully sent unto me by the noble consuls and senators of Breme, and that with a friendly farewell (delivered unto me by the speech of one of their secretaries at my lodgings) need not be specified here what it was. For their going with me in two days to Staden, their abode there, and as much homeward, being in all five days' charges, 30 dollars.

"This was a very dangerous time to ride abroad in thereabouts, as the merchants of Staden can well remember. The excellent learned theologian, the superintendent of Breme, Mr. D. Chrystopher Berzelius his verses, printed the night before that of my going from Breme, and the morning of my departure, openly delivered to me partly, and partly distributed to the company of students and others attending about to see us set forth, and to bid us farewell, may be a memorial of some of my good credit grown in that city, and of the day of my coming from it.

"I will not enlarge my lines to specifie what other charges I was at to further some of her Majestie's servants at my lying at Breme; as 70 dollars given or lent to one Conradus Justus Newbrenner; and about 40 given to gett some letters of great importance brought to our sovereign's honourable privy council in due time.

"The charge of my fraught and passage from

Staden to London for my goods, myself, my wife, children, and servants	10 lib.
" So that the sum total of money, spent and laid out, in and for my remove from Trebon to London doth amount to	796 lib.
" Whereby the whole sum of the former damages and losses	1510 lib.
" And the removing charges doth amount (with the least) to	796 lib.
	2306 lib.

" Besides the 110 dollars disbursed at Breme for dutiful love to Queen and country."

One minor occurrence in the following tradition—viz., the loss of the horse—is related by Lilly as happening to another of the fraternity; but we claim it—upon grounds too trivial it might be deemed by some—for the " Doctor." It is not our intention to spoil a good story by rejecting what we cannot verify. Sufficient for us that the tale exists; though we take the liberty of telling it in our own way.

THERE came a thin spare man one evening to Dr. Dee's residence in the college at Manchester, where he then dwelt by permission only from the Earl of Derby, though living there in the capacity of warden to the church.

The college being dissolved in the first of Edward VI (1547), the possessions fell into the hands of that nobleman, who, however, kept ministers at his own charge to officiate in the church. Mary refounded the establishment, restoring the greater part of the lands, but Lord Derby still kept the college house. In 1578 Elizabeth granted a new foundation to the college, appointing her own wardens. Dr. Dee, being the third on the new establishment, was installed with great solemnity on the 20th February, 1596.

The visitor we have just noticed was muffled in a dark cloak, having a wide and ample collar, which he threw over his head, as though anxious for concealment. The Doctor, having retired into his study, was not to be disturbed ; but the stranger was urgent for admission, while Lettice Gostwich, Dee's help-at-all-work, a pert ungracious slattern, was fully resolved not to permit his access to her master.

" Then since nothing else will do," said the pertinacious intruder, " convey me this message—to wit, a stranger comes to him on business of great moment regarding his own welfare and that of the matter or event whose *corollarium* he is now studying."

Lettice, wearied through his importunity, and hoping by compliance to rid herself from these solicitations, went to the Doctor's private chamber, where, having delivered her message through the thumb-hole of the latch—for on no account would he allow of personal intrusion—to her great surprise, he bade her be gone.

" Show the stranger upstairs," said he. " Why hast thou kept him so long tarrying ? "

Lettice, with little speed and less good will, obeyed the Doctor's behest, grumbling loud at the capricious and uncertain humours of her master.

The visitor was at length ushered into the presence of this celebrated scholar and professor of the celestial sciences, whose predictions at one period astonished Europe ; his presence, like some portentous comet, threatening war and disaster, perplexing even emperors and princes, and filling them with apprehension and dismay. But Dee was somewhat fallen from his high and dangerous celebrity. He was become querulous and ill-tempered. Never satisfied with his present condition, but always aiming at some greater thing, he generally contrived to lose what he already possessed. At one time, to control the destinies and acquire the supreme direction of affairs, either as the High Priest

or the Grand Lama of Europe, was not beyond the compass of his thoughts or the scope of his ambition. Now he was petitioning the Queen for a small increase to his worldly pittance, and an opportunity of clearing himself before her Majesty's council from the foul and slanderous accusations by which he was continually assailed. Yet he had not abandoned his former projects. Though failing in his mission aforetime to the Emperor of Germany, the King of Poland, and others, to whom he evidently went for political purposes, and with offers of his aid, through the foreknowledge and spiritual intercourse by which he thought himself favoured, yet he still cherished the hope of promotion by such visionary follies. That chimera of the imagination, the invention of the philosopher's stone, still haunted him, and he did not yet despair of one day becoming a ruler among princes, the supreme arbiter and depositary of the fate of nations.

The delusions imposed on him by Kelly, his seer and confederate, had so impressed him with this belief, that he still purposed going abroad on a divine mission, as he called it, and only waited the auspicious time when his spiritual instructors should point out another seer in Kelly's room, from whom he had been long separated. Though now in his seventy-first year, he was not deterred from making another attempt to reach the goal of his ambition. Such is the folly and madness of these enthusiasts, that, let them be never so often foiled in their inordinate expectations, yet does it in no wise hinder, but, on the contrary, sets them more fully on their desire. Casaubon, in his preface to the account of Dee's intercourse with spirits, gives a strange instance of their infatuation. He says:

"In the days of Martin Luther, there lived one Michael Stifelius, who applying to himself some place of the Apocalypse, took upon himself to prophesy. He foretold that in the year of the Lord 1533, before the 29th of September, the end of the world and Christ's

coming to judgment would be. He did show so much confidence that, some write, Luther himself was somewhat startled at the first. But that day past, he came a second time to Luther, with new calculations, and had digested the whole business into twenty-two articles, the effect of which was to demonstrate that the end of the world would be in October following. But now Luther thought that he had had trial enough, and gave so little credit to him, that he (though he loved the man) silenced him for a time, which our apocalyptical prophet took very ill at his hands, and wondered much at his incredulity. Well, that month and some after that over, our prophet (who had made no little stir in the country by his prophesying) was cast into prison for his obstinacy. After a while Luther visited him, thinking by that time to find him of another mind; but so far was he from acknowledging his error, that he downright railed at Luther for giving him good counsel. And some write, that to his dying day (having lived to the age of eighty years) he never recanted."

These air-built hopes and projects may in some sort account for the readiness with which Dee admitted the stranger after hearing his message. It seemed to be the very echo of his own thoughts, floating on their dark current, which it quickened by some unknown and mysterious impulse.

The Doctor was sitting in a high and curiously-wrought chair, cushioned with black leather, gilt and ornamented after the antique fashion. His upper garment was of black serge, the neck and breast furred with sables. A cap of the same materials concealed his bald and shining head, giving his pale shrivelled features a peculiar look of learning and hard study. His face was long, and his beard pointed. Age and anxiety were indelibly marked upon his lank visage; but his eye was yet undimmed; small, keen, and restless, it seemed the image of his own insatiable desire,

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consuming soul and body in the fire and fervour of its inordinate and uncontrolled appetite.

"Thy name?" said Dee sharply, as the stranger bowed himself before the reputed magician.

"Bartholomew Hickman."

"And thy business?" enquired the Doctor, with an inquisitive glance.

"Since your reverence hath dismissed Kelly, you have been but indifferently served in the capacity of seer; mine errand is to this purport:—If we agree for wages, I will serve you; and I doubt not but my faculty of seeing will equal that of Master Kelly, provided you have a glass whose quality and virtue shall be equivalent."

"My glass," replied the Doctor, "is not to be matched throughout the world. Even Cornelius Agrippa had not its like; nor was his famous mirror fit to compare with it. Hast heard aught of its history?"

"I would listen, Master Dee, for my knowledge thereof is but gathered from the vulgar report."

"Know then," said Dee, with an air of great pride and complacency, "that my stone was brought by the ministration of angels, in answer to fervent and oft-repeated prayer. One night, as I sate with Kelly, discoursing on the rise and fall of empires, the setting up and the downfall of estates, and many other matters of grave and weighty import, he looked uneasy for a while, saying that he felt a strange sensation, and, as it were, a heavy weight on his right shoulder, as though something sat there. He said a spirit, invisible at that time, was in all likelihood hearkening to our discourse, and wished to communicate with us. He then spake as though to some one behind him, and listened—'Sayest thou so?' said he; 'then will I speedily apprise the Doctor.' He then told me it was the angel Uriel, who would bring us a wonderful glass or crystal, whereby a seer, properly gifted, would be enabled to see many wonderful things; but this surprising faculty I do not possess, by reason of a fiery sign not occupying the cusp of my ascendant

and medium cœli. Edward Kelly was, however, permitted to supply this defect, and I might confidently rely, he said, on the truth of those revelations, which I was to note down for the benefit of mankind, and the establishing of a new dispensation upon the earth. None but good angels could enter into this glass, and they would teach me, as he then foretold, many things, whereby, gaining great honour and renown, kings and princes should be reproved of me, who was raised up for their sakes. At this revelation I was exceeding glad, and more so on finding the day following in my study this precious gem, which, as I once told the Emperor Rodolph, is of such value that no earthly kingdom is worthy to be compared to the virtue or dignity thereof. I well remember the time," said Dee, delighting to dwell on these recollections: "I was at Prague, the emperor having sent for me; I went up to the castle, where, in the *Ritterstove*, or guard chamber, I stayed a little; Octavius Spinola, that was the chamberlain, saluted me very courteously, having understood that I was he whom the emperor waited for. Returning to the privy-chamber, he came out again, leading me by the skirt through the dining-chamber and the privy-chamber, where the emperor sat at a table with a great chest and standish of silver, and my book and letters before him. Then craved I pardon, at his Majesty's hand, for my boldness in sending him my '*Monas Hieroglyphica*,' dedicated to his father; but I did it of the sincere and entire good will that I bare to his father Maximilian, and also unto his Majesty. He then thanked me very kindly, saying—that he knew of my great endowments, and the esteem I had gotten of the learned; of this he had been informed by the Spanish ambassador. He said my book was rather too hard for his capacity; but he heard I had something to say to him, *Quod esset pro sua utilitate*. 'And so I have,' I replied, looking back to see first that we were alone. Hereupon, I began to declare how all my lifetime had

been spent in learning, and with great pains and cost I had come to the best knowledge that man might attain to in this world. I had found, too, that no man living, neither any book, was able to teach me those truths that I desired and longed for. Therefore I concluded within myself to make intercession and prayer to the Giver of all wisdom to send unto me knowledge, whereby I might know the nature of His creatures, and also enjoy means to use them to His honour and glory. At length it pleased God to send me His light—the angel Uriel, whereby I was assured of His merciful and gracious answer. For the space of two years and a half, as I told his Majesty, angels had not ceased to minister unto me through this wonderful stone, whose history I related. Furthermore, I said that I had a message from them unto his Majesty. 'The angel of the Lord hath appeared unto me,' I cried, 'and hath rebuked you for your sins; if you will hear, and believe me, you shall triumph; if you will not hear, the Lord, the God of heaven and earth, under whom you breathe and have your being, putteth His foot against your breast, and will throw you headlong from your seat.' Moreover, I said that if he would listen to me, and take me for his counsellor, his kingdom should be established, so that there would be none like unto it throughout the world. I was commanded, likewise, to show him the nature of the holy vision, and the manner thereof, which he might witness, and hear the words, though he could not see the fashion of the creatures in the glass. He thanked me, and said that he would thenceforward take me to his recommendation and care. Some more promises he used, though I could not well understand them, he spake so low. Perceiving, now, that he wished to make an end for this time, I made my obeisance and departed. But mark the favour of princes!—through the cabals of some, and the intrigues of his favourite and physician, one Doctor Curtz, who was fearful of my displacing him,—in the end I was not only prevented from further access to his Majesty, but

banished the empire! Go to, go to," said Dee, much troubled at these thoughts, "I am something too much affected of these vain impressions, and the pomp of these earthly ones."

He arose, lifting an ebony cabinet on the table, which he unlocked with great solemnity. During this operation he fell to muttering many prayers; and with an air of great reverence he took out a richly-embossed casket, which being opened, there was displayed a fair crystal of an egg-shaped form, on which he gazed with a long and silent delight.

"A treasure beyond all price," said Bartholomew, eyeing it with rapture.

"Even so," said Dee, "and, by the grace of the Giver, I do hope to profit by it. Once it was removed from me. Listen! It was in the little chapel, or oratory, next the chambers which Lord William of Rosenberg had allotted us in his castle at Trebona. I had set the stone in its wonted place upon the table, or altar as we called it, when Kelly saw a great flame in the stone, which thing though he told me, I made no end of my usual prayer. But suddenly one seemed to come in at the south window of the chapel, right opposite to Kelly, while the stone was heaved up without hands, and set down again; wonderful to behold. After which I saw the man who came in at the window: he had his lower parts in a cloud, and, with open arms, flew towards Kelly; at which sight he shrunk back, and the creature took up between both hands the stone with its frame of gold, and mounted up the way he came. Kelly caught at it, but could not touch it; thereupon he was grievously alarmed, and had the *tremor cordis* for a good while after.* This my angelical stone being taken away, I was mightily troubled, for the other stones in my possession being made through man's skill and device, I had not a safe warranty of their virtue, so that I might confidently trust in what they

* *Vide* Casaubon's folio concerning Dee's intercourse with spirits.

should disclose. I was afraid, too, of the intrusion of wicked spirits into them, who might impose on me with their delusions. This happened on a Friday, being the 24th of April, 1587, as I find it recorded in my diary. But mark the manner of its return! The following month, on the 22nd day, and on the same day of the week, about four hours post meridian, as I and Kelly were walking out through the orchard, down the river-side, he saw two little men fighting there furiously with swords; and one said to the other, '*Thou hast beguiled me.*' As I drew near they did not abate their heat, but the fray seemed to wax even hotter than before. I at length said, '*Good friends, let me take up the matter between you*'; whereupon they stayed, the elder of them saying, '*I sent a present to thy wife, and this fellow hath taken it away.*' With this, they again fought until the other was wounded in his thigh, which seemed to bleed. Being in great pain, he took out of his bosom something that I guessed to be the very treasure that I had lost. '*Now will I make thee return it,*' said the first speaker; with that the other, who was wounded, seemed to go suddenly out of sight, but came again ere I could answer a word. The elder of them then asked him, saying, '*Hast thou laid it under the right pillow of the bed where he lay yesternight?*' With these words they both went towards a willow-tree on the right, by the new stairs, which tree seemed to cleave open, and as they went in it closed, and I never saw them more. With great haste I returned to my chamber, where, lifting up the right pillow, I found my precious stone; being greatly rejoiced, together with my wife, who joined me in thanking God for its return."*

"An exceeding comfortable and gracious providence: being preserved, I doubt not, from the evil ones," said Bartholomew Hickman. "But I would fain give you a sample of my skill, if so be that you will prepare the crystal, charging it with due care and attention."

* Casaubon.

Then did the Doctor betake himself to the performance of sundry strange rites, consisting of many absurd forms and hard speeches, ever and anon ejaculating a fervent prayer for success, and a petition against doubt and deception. He spread a fair carpet on the table, disposing the candlesticks on each side, and a little behind the crystal. This was placed upon a cushion of black silk, a crucifix near, and the psalter before it, open at the service for the departed. After a profound silence for about the space of half an hour, Dee looked towards his visitor as if expecting that he should begin. The Seer threw off his upper garment, and kneeling down, clad only in a short tunic of grey cloth, without ruff or belt, he betook himself, though with some agitation, to the repeating of a few short Latin prayers, intermingled with cabalistical jargon, and scraps of some unknown and uncouth tongue. The Doctor gave special heed thereto, hearkening as though not over-credulous in the boasted skill of his visitor. Presently the latter put his face close to the stone, binding it before his eyes with a white napkin, his head still resting on the table. Dee asked him softly, "What seest thou?"

"Nothing," said Bartholomew.

"Is the curtain not yet visible in the stone?"

"I cannot even see the curtain," replied the Seer; "for all is dark."

Then Dee began to pray earnestly that some of his former friends might appear, whom he called by many outlandish names, such as *Ave*, *Nalvage*, *Madini*, and others. Immediately Bartholomew cried out—

"I see a glimmer!—Soft!"

The Doctor scarcely durst breathe, fearing to interrupt the opening of the vision.

"I see a golden curtain, partly drawn aside."

"The charge beginneth to work," said Dee. "'Tis the very appearance that was always vouchsafed to Kelly ere the spirits showed themselves in the glass. Note well what thou seest."

"There appeareth a white cloud, as a curdly vapour wreathing itself about a pillar of burning brass, but no creature is visible.—I hear a voice!"

"Mark the words and repeat them steadily," said the Doctor, who drew nearer that he might hear the purport of the revelation.

"*Sanctum signatum et ad tempus*," said the voice.

"The sense of this may be understood diversely. By which sense may we be guided?" said Dee, as though speaking to some invisible thing within the glass. Presently the Seer again repeated—

"'*Sanctum, quia hoc velle suum; sigillatum, quia determinatum ad tempus*'; the voice ceaseth:—but these be hard speeches, Master Dee. I hear again, '*Ad tempus et ad tempus* (*inquam*) *quia rerum consummatio—All things are at hand—*

"'*The seat is prepared.*
Justice hath determined.
The time is short.'"

"Seest thou no creature?" anxiously enquired the Doctor.

"None. But the pillar openeth as though it were cleft. Now a woman cometh forth out of the pedestal, covered with a cloud. I can see her face dimly at times through this veil, which seemeth to pass over as a thin cloud before the dazzling sun. She standeth as though in a hollow shell, glistening with such fair colours that no earthly brightness may be comparable to it. She now seemeth to wrap the air about her as a garment. She entereth into a thick cloud and disappears. There now cometh one like unto a little girl, her hair turned up before, and flowing behind in long and bright curls. Her raiment sparkles like unto changeable silk, green and red."

"'Tis *Madini*," said Dee, with great delight. "Note well what she sayeth, for she is my good angel."

"She sitteth down. Her lips move as though she were speaking, but I hear nothing."

"I will speak to her." said Dee; "for she will answer me through thy ministry, if it really be Madini. Art thou Madini, that hast appeared to me beforetime?"

"I think she answereth, 'Yes.' But her voice is very feeble."

"I would thou shouldest resolve me three things," said the Doctor, again addressing himself towards the glass. "To wit—Whereto shall I direct my journey and how shall I cause it to prosper? Secondly, I would speedily be instructed in that great and heavenly mystery, the powder of projection, which I have seen oft promised, but never understood aright by reason of my feeble apprehensions, or inability to accomplish the grand and sublime arcanum. Thirdly, How may I find the treasure which was shown to me in a dream three several times; but where it is hidden is withheld from me?"

"She says she will answer so far as the will of him that sent her will permit; but she hath a short continuance, and her answer must be brief. With respect to the country, make thine own choice, and thou shalt be directed in it for thy good. The other questions she says she cannot solve, but will send one of the seven who bear rule over the seals of the metals and their matrix. She hath departed, yet I saw her not. She went like a sudden stroke of light; and now there cometh a man clad in sober apparel, with an inkhorn at his girdle. He holdeth a pen, as though he would write, but his face is veiled."

"'Tis a motion that I should bring my tablets," said the Doctor.

"Now he is writing," continued the Seer. "He showeth me a roll of parchment. But the glass becometh dim, and I think that evil spirits are troubling us, for the whole seems to waver, like the glowing air over the furnace."

The Doctor now fell to his prayers, when Bartholomew

assured him the glass grew brighter, gradually becoming still, like the subsiding of waves after some accidental disturbance. He could now see the writing distinctly, and the veil was also removed.

"Give me the words to the very letter," said Dee earnestly, as he prepared to write.

"It runs thus:—'The most noble and divine magister; the beginning and continuation of life. Watch well, and gather him so at the highest; for in one hour he descendeth or ascendeth from the purpose.

"'*Take common Audcal, purge and work it by Rlodnr, of four divers digestions, continuing the last digestion for fourteen days in one and a swift proportion, until it be Dlasod fixed, a most red and luminous body, the image of resurrection. Take also Lulo of Red Roxtan and work him through the four fiery degrees, until thou have his Audcal, and then gather him. Then double every degree of your Rlodnr, and by the law of mixture and conjunction work then diligently together. Notwithstanding backward through every degree, multiply the lower and last Rlodnr, his due office finished by one degree more than the highest. So doth it become Darr, the thing you seek for; a holy, just, glorious, red, and dignified Dlasod.*'"

"Methinks I have heard this before," said Dee, "and understood it not. I am truly in great perplexity for want of money; but still I understand not the purport of these symbols, the which, I beseech thee, now vouchsafe to thine unworthy servant."

"'See thou take the season,'" said the voice, '"and get her while it is yet time. If ye let the harvest pass, ye shall desire to gather and shall not be able.'"

"Take pity on mine infirmities, and make it plain," supplicated the Doctor, who now began to fear the usual evasions and disappointments.

"'Before I go,'" replied the vision, "'I will not be hidden from thee. Read thy lesson.'"

"I read, '*Take common Audcal*,' and so on."

" ' What is Audcal ? ' inquireth the spirit."

" Alas ! I know not ; but thou knowest."

" ' It is gold, and Dlasod is sulphur.' "

" Take also, it says, Lulo of Red Roxtan."

" ' Roxtan is pure and simple wine in herself, and Lulo is her mother.' "

" There is yet in these words no slight ambiguity."

" ' Lulo is tartar of red wine, and Audcal is his mercury. Darr, in the angelical tongue, is the true name of the stone.' "

" He said before that Audcal was gold," said Dee, addressing the Seer.

" Be thankful," replied Bartholomew, " and keep what thou hast received."

The Doctor was for the present satisfied ; but a little reflection afterwards, and another trial, left him as ignorant and as poor as ever.

He now returned thanks in the Latin tongue, it being his general custom at the end of each revelation, or motion, as it was called.

" *Deo nostro omnipotenti sit omnis Laus, Honor, Gloria, et Jubilatio.*" Unto which the Seer responded, " Amen."

" Now for the third question."

" He goeth to one side," said Bartholomew, " and the curtain hideth him. Now he returneth, leading an old man blindfolded, who answereth him in manner following, as though to questions put by the first :— ' It is within, and by a garden belonging to the new lodge in Aldport Park. It is in three parts or places.' He now seems to pause. Again he speaks—' Many roots and trees do hinder the gathering of it ; but if he be wise, and understand these things, he may obtain his pleasure. One part was laid by Sir James Stanley, the warden, an hundred years ago. Another portion was hidden by an aged man. The remainder was left by the Romans, and may be found under the foundations of the castle in the park. The time is short, and the

treasure guarded; but he shall overcome. Listen:— '*Nine with twice seven northerly, and* ACER *shall disappear. The mystical number added to the number enfolding itself; this shall be added to its own towards the rising sun. Then turn half-round, and note well thy right foot. What thou seest gather, and it shall lead thee on to perfection.*' "

"Ask him the amount or worth of the treasure," said Dee, whose cupidity gloated over the bare thoughts of this vast hoard.

"He says, it is 'two thousand and a half, besides odd money.' "

"How? In gold or silver?"

"'More than three parts thereof are in gold.' "

"Most humbly and heartily do I thank thee, oh "——

Dee was opening out another form of thanksgiving addresses.

"The old man goeth aside, groping his way as though it were dark. Now all is dim, and the curtain covereth the stone, by which we are warned to retire."

The needful and concluding ceremonies being gone through, the crystal was returned to its place. After pondering awhile, the Doctor put many questions to his guest about his residence, worldly calling, and so forth. He offered him £50 yearly, besides lodging, and a fair porportion of gold when the celestial and highest projection should be completed. Bartholomew was not hard at making a bargain, and the Doctor began to hope that, by a patient waiting and trust in the efficacy of these strange delusions, he should at length accomplish his desires.

A low tap at the door again betokened the presence of Lettice, who came to announce a warm friend of the Doctor's, one Master Eccleston. On being admitted, the latter brought with him a low, ferret-eyed personage, whose leering aspect betrayed an inward consciousness of great cunning and self-satisfaction therewith. Dee received his guests with becoming dignity, enquiring

to what good fortune he was indebted for their visit.

"Thou mayest remain, Hickman," said he to his new acquaintance.

Eccleston proceeded to business as follows:—

"You may readily remember that I once happened a sore mischance—to wit, by losing a horse I had but lately bought, and which, through your good offices, kindly and without fee administered, I again got back, to my great joy and comfort. I was telling of this but a few days agone to a friend of mine, one Barnabas Hardcastle, whom I have made bold to bring before your reverence. He but laughed at me for my pains, and would in no wise believe it, but mark how he was served! Within this hour, he tells me that he has lost his mare, and would fain have the like help to its recovery."

"Hast thou lost thy beast?" enquired the Doctor.

"Verily I have," said Barnabas, making a respectful acknowledgment to the Doctor's dignified address. "It was but this morning she was safe as Mancastle is in the dirt, hard by Mr. Lever's house yonder, in the fields. 'Tis a grievous loss, Master Dee, seeing that I was offered a score of pounds for the beast last Martinmas.

The Doctor opened his tables, and erected a scheme or figure of the heavens, to the very minute when this communication was made. Ere it was finished he gave a sharp and shrewd glance at the stranger, saying—

"The latter part of the sign Scorpio ascendeth, and it is not safe to give judgment. Mars, lord thereof, is in evil aspect with Venus, lady of the seventh and sixth likewise, or house of servants. Yet is Mercury lord of the tenth, and free from affliction. I will therefore try my skill, though I should fail. The beast thou lackest is either taken by a servant or lost through his neglect. Stay. The Dragon's Tail, which I have just placed, being located in the seventh, thy mare is certainly lost, and will never be recovered."

Dee looked earnestly at the man, who, gathering his features into a grin of contempt, could scarcely refrain from an unmannerly burst of laughter.

"Now, o' my troth," said he, "I was but minded to try the skill of your prophet, and to show your folly. The roan mare is safe, and I left her but an hour ago with my lad, who is walking her to and fro just out of the town-fields by Withy Grove, until I have done mine errand."

"Thou art a bold man to say so," replied the Doctor angrily, and with a glance as though it were meant to annihilate this contemner of the celestial art. "I tell thee she is lost, and shall never be got back: a reward thou hast well earned for thy folly."

With a scornful and malicious grin did Master Barnabas receive this denunciation, taking his departure with little ceremony, as if fearful of some mischance. Eccleston, much scandalized at his friend's proceedings, followed him downstairs, not caring to stay longer with the Doctor.

As Bartholomew and he sate discoursing on the future, and forming many projects, more particularly about the hidden treasures, without which, Dee said, he could not continue his search for the elixir, as he was nigh beggared, they heard a swift footstep on the stairs. Presently in rushed Eccleston followed by Lettice, who strove to prevent this intrusion. The Doctor frowned on his entrance, but Eccleston, breathless and much agitated, could with difficulty declare his errand.

"Hardcastle—Hardcastle—I say. He has lost his beast."

"Why, I told him so," said the Doctor, with great composure.

"But he *has* lost her!"

"I know it," replied Dee.

"I have just left him in great anger, swearing by things both visible and invisible that he will have his own again; that we are confederate in the matter: and

that he will cite us both before the chapter of the Star Chamber."

"How hath it happened?" said Dee, scrawling listlessly with his pen.

"I went with him to the boy, thinking I would see the end on't. By the way he did use many taunts and ill-natured speeches about my pursuit after the great arcanum and belief in the celestial sciences; together with many unpleasant hints that the money we have expended in the adventure will never be got back. Discoursing thus, we came near to the place where he expected to find the boy. Sure enough he was there, and fast asleep on the ground; but the mare was gone, the bridle being left on the lad's arm, which his master banged about his shoulders until he awaked. Pray, Master Dee, be pleased to help him to his mare. I owe him moneys, for which he, taking advantage of the debt, may put me in prison."

"The scoffer shall not go unpunished, nor shall he that revileth partake of the blessing. Go thy way, and tell him he may not recover his goods."

Eccleston departed with this heavy message, and Bartholomew was again left communing with the Doctor.

The matter that still occupied their thoughts was the treasure at Aldport Lodge. With this in their possession they might reasonably expect that great progress would be made in their search for the philosopher's stone and the vivifying elixir. These important articles obtained, the hidden secrets of nature would be at their command, and their schemes and wishes might then be pursued with the certainty of success. The night but one following, at the precise time when the moon came to a trine aspect with Saturn and Jupiter, was appointed for the discovery. The hour of Saturn commenced five minutes before midnight, and the heavenly influences were then singularly disposed in favour of their undertaking.

With dazzling anticipations of future prosperity and success they separated: one to indulge in dreams so chimerical and vast that even Fancy herself drew back, dazzled with her own brightness; the other to an obscure lodging in the Old Millgate, where he committed himself to the keeping of a straw pallet and a coverlet of which the rats had for some time before held undisputed possession.

The night fixed upon for their search proved drizzling and misty. Bartholomew, wrapped in a thick cloak, sallied out of a low postern towards the college. The path was more dangerous and uneven than at present, and many a grim witness of good-fellowship with his clay had the red cloth hose of Master Bartholomew Hickman ere he arrived at the arched doorway which admitted him into Dee's lodging. We have no means of ascertaining with any degree of certainty the musings and ruminations of the Seer in his progress, not having the power, or skill it may be, like unto many profound and praiseworthy historians, who can portray the form and colour of the mind as well as the cut and capacity of the doublet. Suffice it to say, that he was so fully occupied in conning over his errand as not to be aware that a certain malicious personage was dodging his steps—to wit, our worthy owner of the mare, Barnabas Hardcastle, who kept a strict watch about the premises, hoping to find some clue to the discovery of his beast.

An hour elapsed ere they came forth; the Doctor bearing a covered light, and after him the little spare form of Bartholomew Hickman, carrying under his cloak sundry implements for the search.

Passing through the churchyard, they turned into the Dean's Gate, creeping near the houses, whose overhanging gables poured down a copious shower from their dripping eaves. The streets echoed but to the tread of these adventurers, and to the howl of a solitary watch-dog roused by their approach. They passed the gate without difficulty; the Doctor was supposed to have

been called forth on clerical duties, and the porter accordingly permitted their egress, merely enquiring the probable time of their return.

A few straggling houses were built nigh to the ditch and out-works ; beyond these the way was open towards the park. Here they arrived in due time, entering in by a side wicket, which led them round to the back part of the house by the gardens.

The proprietorship of the Lodge had latterly fallen to the lot of Edward Mosley, by a deed of partition between his brother Oswald Mosley and himself, a mercer of great note in Manchester, one Adam Smythe ; these parties having purchased, jointly, the lands of Nether and Over Aldport from Thomas Rowe of Hartford, who had them of Sir Randle Brereton, the next purchaser from William, Earl of Derby. The house and grounds, about ninety-five acres, of Nether and Over Aldport, formerly belonged to the warden of the college for the time being, and were held, by a rent of four marks per annum only, from the Lord de la Warre. It was enjoyed uninterruptedly by them until the dissolution of this community in the first of Edward VI, when it was granted to the Earl of Derby along with the rest of the college lands.

Elizabeth, however, in the twenty-first year of her reign, granted a new foundation to the college : but the Earl of Derby, who still kept possession of the college-house and some portion of the lands, suffered the warden and ministers for some time to lodge there.

The house at Aldport was moated round, and a draw-bridge stood before the main entrance. The mansion was built of timber and plaster, with huge projecting stone chimneys, gable ends, and deep casements—a fitting residence in those days for rank and nobility.

Outside the moat was an extensive garden, laid out in a sumptuous style, beyond which appeared a mound of considerable elevation and extent, the site of Man-castle, famous in history as one of the strongholds of

the Romans, some account of which may be found in the legend of "Sir Tarquin."

"I have been thinking," said Dee, after being silent for a space, "that no savour of dishonesty can attach to our appropriation of this great treasure, seeing the house and all this fair and goodly inheritance did once appertain to the wardens of our college, of which patrimony we have been most unjustly deprived by the statute of King Edward. My gracious mistress, our Queen, not having reinstated me into this my lawful possession, I have made bold to remind her Majesty of our wrongs, and to supplicate her clemency thereupon."

Bartholomew felt fully satisfied of the right they had to these spoils, his conscience being easily quieted on the score of appropriation.

"The rain becomes heavier, and it is more chill and showery than before. The mist, too, is driving north-east," said the Doctor. "The clouds are cumbrous and broken, coiling, as they roll, into huge masses that will ere long bring some of the dark Atlantic on their tails. Seest thou not, Bartholomew, as though it were a grim pile of hills on the horizon?"

"I see as it might be a heavy wall of clouds gathering about us; and I think the wind comes on more fitful and squally. These heavy lunges betoken an angry and vicious humour in the air that will not be long in bursting."

"We shall have it about our ears speedily. We must to work while it is yet a-brewing below."

The dark pointed roofs and chimneys of the Lodge might be distinguished in grotesque masses, changeless and unvarying, against the ever-shifting darkness of the sky. A pale star sometimes looked out as if by stealth, but was obscured almost ere its brightness could be developed. The wind, as it rushed by, broke into short and irregular gusts, like scouts from the main body, betokening its approach. The rain had ceased,

save a few hasty drops at intervals plashing heavily on the moat.

"What is that?" said Bartholomew in a whisper, pointing to the water. A light had glanced on its surface, and as suddenly had it disappeared.

"Again!" Dee smiled as he looked upwards to a star just twinkling through the cloud. Like some benignant spirit, as it alighted on the dark bosom of the moat, the short sharp gust fluttering over, it seemed to hover there for a while ere it departed.

Turning out of the path, they approached a thick yew-tree flanking one corner of the garden.

"I think we may climb here, Master Dee, with little risk;—there seems a fair gap beside its trunk."

They scrambled up a high bank, thrusting themselves, with some difficulty, through the opening. The Doctor now, looking round, began to recite his instructions:—"'*Nine with twice seven northerly, and* ACER *shall disappear. The mystical number added to the number enfolding itself. This shall be added to its own, towards the rising of the sun. Then turn half-round, and note well thy right foot;—what thou seest gather, and it shall lead thee on to perfection.*' Good; but from what point shall we begin to count?" said the divine, in great perplexity.

"I know not," said Bartholomew, "unless it be from the sycamore tree at the opposite corner yonder by the old wall."

"Thou knowest the ground hereabout?" said the Doctor hastily.

"Peradventure I may," replied the other. "Being told aforetime of treasure that was hidden, I have wandered often, at odd times, round the garden."

"Lead the way, then; it may be this same Acer is the tree of which thou speakest. Time passes, and I would not miss this lucky hour for all my hopes of preferment."

Preceded by his guide, the Doctor soon came within

range of a noble sycamore that threw out its huge branches in all the pride of a long and undisturbed occupation.

"Nine with twice seven northerly, and Acer shall disappear." Shall I stride the ground so many steps, or is there a mystic and hidden signification couched in these numbers?"

"I know not," said Bartholomew; "but we had best make the trial."

The Doctor, with great earnestness, began to stride out the number northerly, but the sycamore did not disappear; its long bare boughs were still seen throwing out their leafless and haggard extremities against the lowering sky.

They now took counsel, when Bartholomew suggested that, as numbers were often used symbolically, they must look elsewhere for a solution. It might be the exact number of trees lying between the great sycamore and the place signified. "And there they be," said the Seer, pointing to a goodly row of small twigs newly planted. "Now count the northerly, beginning as at first."

This being done, the Doctor was greatly comforted on finding himself fairly soused up to the knees in a deep ditch or drain, from whence all appearance of the sycamore was effectually excluded.

"Now," said the adept, still standing as before, "the mystical number, which is three, added to the most excellent number, which I take to be three times three, or the number enfolding itself, will make twelve; but there be no trees eastward, or towards the rising sun."

"Then try the steps once more," said Bartholomew, "and take heed they are of the right length,—proper easy-going steps. Stay, I will count them myself."

Leaving his companion in the ditch, the Seer counted forth his number with due care, halting at the last step.

"Now stand in my place, turn half-round, and gather from thy right foot."

Dee, having cleared the bog, placed himself in the required position. Stooping down, he groped diligently by his right foot, but was aware of nothing but a crabbed stump, that resisted every attempt they could use for its dislodgment.

"Bring the mattock," said the Doctor, cautiously uncovering the light. But though Bartholomew tugged with great energy, the Doctor helping, it was to little purpose, for the stump was immovable.

"We had best try the probe." Saying this, the warder drew forth an instrument in shape something like unto a large auger. He could by this means easily ascertain if anything hard were below, or any symptoms of concealed treasure. As they were thus engaged a hollow voice, to their terrified apprehensions issuing from the ground, cried out—

"Hold!"

The treasure-hunters came to a full pause. The wind and rain at the same time beat so heavily they could not ascertain the sequel to this injunction.

"'Tis Nargal, the spirit who guards hidden treasures," said Dee: "we can approach him only by prayers and fumigations."

"Then must we return?" said Bartholomew, apparently unwilling to desist.

"Hark!" said the Doctor, listening.

They heard a moan, as that of some one in great pain. Presently a faint shriek stole through a pause in the blast.

"'Tis like the groan of a mandrake," he continued: "they do ever lament and bewail thus when gathered. I doubt not but this tree is of that accursed nature."

Again the voice was articulate.

"To-morrow thou mayest return at this hour; but I will not yield my treasure save thou bring me gold!"

"Who art thou?"

"I am the guardian of the treasure; and

"Gold I have. Bring gold with thee;
Or thou shalt get no gold from me."

"What is thy demand?" enquired Dee, in a hollow voice, like that of an exorcist.

"Prop thy purse with fifty nobles;—then dig, and I will tell thee."

The two worthies were somewhat startled at this demand. It was more than their joint forces could muster. Yet two thousand and more broad pieces, besides other valuables, which lay there for the gathering, was too profitable a return to make them easily give up the adventure. Accordingly, after some further questions which the demon as resolutely refused to answer, they departed, first replacing the earth and other matters they had disturbed in their former position.

Early on the following morning the eager divine applied to his friend Eccleston for another loan, assuring him it was the last; while from the produce of the treasure he would be enabled to pay his former advances, with a copious interest thereon. The needy expectant was loath to furnish him with another supply, though in the end he was prevailed on to borrow from his friends, at an exorbitant interest, for one day only.

This important preliminary being arranged, the night was anxiously awaited, and though more than usually tardy in its approach, twilight at length threw her mantle of grey over the world's cares and perplexities, and night, that universal coverlet of all things, whether good or evil, did wrap them gently about.

And a night of more loveliness and lustre never was unveiled to the eye of mortals.

The stars were walking in brightness—so clear and sparkling that each seemed a ray or an emblem of that ineffably glorious Beam whose uncreated splendour no eye can see and live. Those bright clusters that we now behold have been the same through all generations, and

they have seen " all things that are done under the sun." Fixed as the everlasting hills, their bounds and their habitation have been unchanged. The same lights were in the heavens when Abraham looked up from the plains of Mamre, as now when the Arab and the Ishmaelite are in the desert. The bands of Orion are not loosed, nor the sweet influences of the Pleiades unbound. The same glittering groups which the patriarch beheld beam nightly on our tabernacles. They have shone upon the world's heroes and the world's demigods—bright links in the oblivion of ages. And the numerous hosts we gaze upon will present the same glowing and immutable forms to cheer and gladden the eyes and hearts of coming generations.

Some feeling of this nature was probably rising in the Doctor's bosom as they once more took the open path to Aldport, and he looked on the wide hemisphere about him—the heavens, with their glowing constellations, all spread out without an obscurity or an obstruction. He felt for one moment the folly and futility of earthly things, and his heart seemed to wither in the immensity into which it was plunged.

It was like a faint glimpse of eternity, and he shrunk back from the abyss, all his own vast world of thought, feeling, and desire, lost in that immeasurable space. But the dazzling dream of ambition again passed before him. The portals of universal empire and immortality were thrown open. He drove back the unwelcome intruder, but the phantom he pursued again fluttered from his grasp.

They had marked the spot on their former visit, and Dee, with the fifty gold pieces in his purse, Bartholomew Hickman acting as chief workman, began his unholy proceedings: not, however, without some fear of the demon whom these moneys were to propitiate. Bartholomew laboured with great diligence, but the earth was much easier to remove than before, and the old stump soon gave way, making but a slight resistance.

This was attributed to some charm wrought by the treasure they carried, and was looked upon as a favourable omen—an unloosing of the fetters which guarded the deposit. Every spadeful of earth was carefully examined, and the probe thrust down anxiously and with great caution. About a yard in depth had been taken away when the spade struck upon something hard. The strokes were redoubled, and a narrow flag appeared. Raising this obstacle they beheld a wooden coffer. Dee sung out a Latin prayer as usual; for he failed not to pour out his thanks with great fervour for any selfish indulgence that fell in his way, or, as he imagined, was granted to him by the special favour of Heaven.

"There," said Bartholomew, raising the box, which from its weight and capacity promised a rich reward, "I think we have now what will season our labours well. What think you, Master Dee?"

But the Doctor was absorbed in visions of future greatness, now bursting on him with a glory and rapidity almost painful to contemplate. He seized the shrine, scarcely giving his helpmate time to fill up and conceal their depredations.

"But the fifty pieces—have you got them safe?" enquired Bartholomew.

"They are in my pouch. I do think the demon hath forgotten to demand them."

"Fear not, he will be ready enough to ask for his own. What comes o'er the devil's back will sooner or later go under his belly!"

"Let us pack and begone," said the Doctor, fearful of losing his treasure.

The box was presently swung over the Seer's shoulders, Dee following to keep all safe, though not without many apprehensions and misgivings of heart. He feared lest the spirit might appear again for his own; or, at least, for the fifty pieces of gold which were his right.

Just as they came to the gap by the yew-tree, and

Bartholomew was resting against the trunk, a voice from behind them shouted—

"Stop! What make ye here, ye villains?"

Dee turned round and the light flashed upon two armed men, masked, who evidently came towards them with no friendly intent.

"Put down that box," said the foremost.

Bartholomew was proceeding to surrender at discretion, but Dee first enquired their errand.

"We can tell ye that in a twinkling," said the malicious intruders, "after we have stepped up to the lodge, and given them a pretty guess at the quality of the knaves who be robbing of their garden. Nay, Doctor, we take no excuse, unless we take our share of the spoil with it. To work, or ye budge not hence without discovery."

This was a provoking interruption—their all depended on a favourable issue to this adventure. Dee therefore offered terms of capitulation as follows:—

"I'll give you five-and-twenty gold pieces on the spot if ye will let us pass."

"Five-and-twenty!—why, that box may hold five-and-twenty hundred," said the freebooter with a whistle, by way of derision.

"Perhaps not," said the Doctor, warily; "it is not yet tried, and may not be opened here without risk. Come to my lodgings to-morrow, and we will share in the product."

"Nay," returned the rogue, sharply, "a pullet in the pen is worth a hundred in the fen. Come, we will deal kindly with thee: give us fifty, and pass on."

Dee willingly opened his pouch, and threw the gold into the fellow's greasy cap, which he held out for the purpose. Immediately they took to their heels and departed.

"The demon was more kind, and of a different nature from those that do generally haunt these hidden treasures," said the Doctor, as he trudged along, fol-

lowing closely at Bartholomew's heels. "If he had not warned me to bring the gold, these thieves must needs have opened the box. Had they seen the vast hoard which it contains I should not have been released for thrice the sum."

With mutual congratulations on their good fortune, and many pious thanksgivings on the part of Dee, they arrived, without further molestation, at the college, where Lettice was ill-humouredly awaiting their return.

Bartholomew threw down his burden in the study, where the Doctor, cautiously guarding against intrusion, wrenched open the chest. His rage and agony may be conceived when he found the treasure transformed into a heap of stones, bearing the following malicious doggerel on their front:

"My mare is lost, but I've the gold;
My mare is better lost than sold.
Full fifty pieces, broad and bright,
My bullies bring me home to-night.
My trap is baited!—Springs it well,
I get the kernel, thou the shell!

"From thy loving

BARNABAS HARDCASTLE, *Armiger*."

THE SEER

" *Petruchio.* Pray, have you not a daughter
Call'd Katharina, fair and virtuous ?
" *Baptista.* I have a daughter, sir, call'd Katharina."
Taming of the Shrew, Act II, Scene 1.

" What sudden chance is this, quoth he,
That I to love must subject be,
Which never thereto would agree,
But still did it defie ? "
King Cophetua and the Beggar-maid.

" Yet she was coy, and would not believe
That he did love her so ;
No, nor at any time would she
Any countenance to him show.
The Bailiff's Daughter of Islington.

THE wonderful exploits of Edward Kelly, one of which is recorded in the following narrative, would if collected, fill a volume of no small dimensions. He was for a considerable time the companion and associate of John Dee, by courtesy called Doctor, from his great acquirements, performing for him the office of seer, a faculty not possessed by Dee, who was in consequence obliged to have recourse to Kelly for the revelations he has published respecting the world of spirits. These curious transactions may be found in Casaubon's work, entitled " A true and faithful Revelation of what passed between Dr. John Dee and some Spirits "—opening out another dark page in the history of imposture and credulity. Dee says that he was brought into unison with Kelly by the mediation of the angel Uriel. Afterwards he found himself deceived by him in his opinion that these spirits, which ministered unto him, were messengers of the Deity. They had several quarrels beforetime ; but when he found Kelly degenerating

into the worst species of the magic art for purposes of avarice and fraud, he broke off all connection with him, and would never afterwards be seen in his company. Kelly, being discountenanced by the Doctor, betook himself to the meanest practices of magic, in all which money and the works of the devil appear to have been his chief aim. Many wicked and abominable transactions are recorded of him. Weber, in his "Funereal Monuments," records that Kelly, in company with one Paul Warring, who acted with him in all his conjurations, went to the churchyard of Walton-le-Dale, near Preston, where they had information of a person being interred who was supposed to have hidden a considerable sum of money, and to have died without disclosing where it was deposited. They entered the churchyard exactly at midnight, and having had the grave pointed out in the preceding day, they opened it and the coffin, exorcising the spirit of the deceased until it again animated the body, which rose out of the grave and stood upright before them. It not only satisfied their wicked desires, it is said, but delivered several strange predictions concerning persons in the neighbourhood, which were literally and exactly fulfilled.

In "Lilly's Memoirs" we have the following account of him :—

"Kelly outwent the Doctor—viz., about the elixir and philosopher's stone, which neither he nor his master obtained by their own labour and industry. It was in this manner Kelly obtained it, as I had it related from an ancient minister, who knew the certainty thereof from an old English merchant resident in Germany, at what time both Kelly and Dee were there.

"Dee and Kelly being on the confines of the emperor's dominions, in a city where resided many English merchants, with whom they had much familiarity, there happened an old friar to come to Dr. Dee's lodging, knocking at the door. Dee peeped down the stairs :—'Kelly,' says he, 'tell the old man I am not at home.' Kelly did so. The friar said, 'I will take another time to wait on him.' Some few days after he came again. Dee ordered Kelly, if it were the same person, to deny him again. He did so; at which the friar was very angry. 'Tell thy master I

came to speak with him and to do him good, because he is a great scholar and famous ; but now tell him, he put forth a book, and dedicated it to the emperor. It is called "*Monas Hieroglyphica*. He understands it not. I wrote it myself. I came to instruct him therein, and in some other more profound things. Do thou, Kelly, come along with me ; I will make thee more famous than thy master Dee.' Kelly was very apprehensive of what the friar delivered, and thereupon suddenly retired from Dee, and wholly applied unto the Friar, and of him either had the elixir ready made, or the perfect method of its preparation and making. The poor friar lived a very short time after ; whether he died a natural death, or was otherwise poisoned or made away by Kelly, the merchant who related this did not certainly know."

Kelly was born at Worcester, and had been an apothecary. He had a sister who lived there for some time after his death, and who used to exhibit some gold made by her brother's projection. "It was vulgarly reported that he had a compact with the devil, which he outlived, and was seized at midnight by infernal spirits, who carried him off in sight of his family, at the instant he was meditating a mischievous design against the minister of the parish, with whom he was greatly at enmity."

It would have been easy to select a more historical statement of facts respecting Kelly ; but the following tale, the events of one day only, will, we hope, be more interesting to the generality of readers. It exhibits a curious display of the intrigues and devices by which these impostors acquired an almost unlimited power over the minds of their fellow-men. Human credulity once within their grasp, they could wield this tremendous engine at their will, directing it either to good or bad intents, but more often to purposes of fraud and self-aggrandisement.

In the ancient and well-thriven town of Manchester formerly dwelt a merchant of good repute, Cornelius Ethelstoun by name. Plain dealing and an honest countenance withal had won for him a character of no ordinary renown. His friezes were the handsomest ;

his stuffs and camlets were not to be sampled in the market, or even throughout the world; insomuch that the courtly dames of Venice, and the cumbrous vrows of Amsterdam and the Hague, might be seen flaunting in good attire gathered from the storehouse of Master Cornelius.

His coffers glittered with broad ducats, and his cabinets with the rarest productions of the East. His warehouses were crammed, even to satiety, and his trestles groaned under heaps of rich velvets, costly brocades, and other profitable returns to his foreign adventures. But alas!—and whose heart holdeth not communion with that word!—Cornelius was unhappy. He had one daughter, whom "he loved passing well"; yet, as common report did acknowledge, the veriest shrew that ever went unbridled. In vain did his riches and his revenues increase; in vain was plenty poured into his lap, and all that wealth could compass accumulate in lavish profusion. Of what avail was this outward and goodly show against the cruel and wayward temper of his daughter?

Kate—by this name we would distinguish her, as veritable historians are silent on her sponsorial appellation—Kate was unhappily fair and well-favoured. Her hair was dark as the raven plume; but her skin, white as the purest statuary marble, grew fairer beneath the black and glossy wreaths twining gracefully about her neck. Her cheek was bright as the first blush of the morning, and ever and anon, as a deeper hue was thrown upon its rich but softened radiance, she looked like a vision from Mahomet's paradise—a being nurtured by a warmer sky and fiercer suns than our cold climate can sustain. She had lovers, but all approach was denied, and, one by one, they stood afar off and gazed. Her pretty mouth, lovely even in the proudest glance of petulance and scorn, was so oftentimes moulded into the same aspect that it grew puckered and contemptuous, rendering her disposition but too manifest; and

yet—wouldest thou believe it, gentle reader?—she was in love!

Now it so fell out that on the very morning from which we date this first passage of our history, Cornelius awoke earlier than he was wont. His brow wore an aspect of more than ordinary care. It was but too evident that his pillow had been disturbed. Thoughts of more than usual perplexity had deprived him of his usual measure of repose. His very beard looked abrupt and agitated; his dress bore marks of indifference and haste. A slight, but tremulous movement of the head, in general but barely visible, was now advanced into a decided shake. With a step somewhat nimbler than aforetime, he made, as custom had long rendered habitual, his first visit to the counting-house.

The unwearied and indefatigable Timothy Dodge sat there, with the same crooked spectacles, and, as it might seem, mending the same pen which the same knife had nibbed for at least half a century. The tripod on which rested this grey Sidrophel of accompts looked of the like hard and impenetrable material as though it were grown into his similitude, forming but a lower adjunct to his person. It was evident they had not parted company for the last twenty years. Nature had formed him awry. A boss or hump, of considerable elevation, extended like a huge promontory on one shoulder; from the other depended an arm longer by some inches than its fellow. As it described a greater arc, its activity was proportionate. His grey and restless eyes followed the merchant's track with unwearied fidelity; yet was he a man full sparing of words—the ever ready "Anon, master," being the chief burden of his replications. It was like the troll of an old ballad—a sort of inveterate drawl tripping unwittingly from the tongue.

The sun was just peeping through the long dim casement as Cornelius stepped over the threshold of his sanctuary. In it lay hidden the mysteries of many

a goodly tome, more precious in his eyes than the rarest and richest that Dee's library could boast. No mean value, inasmuch as this celebrated scholar and mathematician, who was lately appointed warden of the college, had the most costly store of book-furniture that individual ever possessed.

"Good morrow, Dodge."

The pen was twice nibbed ere the usual rejoinder.

"Are the camlets arrived from the country?" inquired the merchant.

"Anon, master—this forenoon may be."

"Is the accompt against Anthony Hardcastle discharged?"

"No," ejaculated the grim fixture.

"And where is the piece of Genoa velvet Dame Margery looked out yesterday for her mistress's wedding-suit? I do bethink me it is a good ell too long at the measure."

"Six ells, three nails, and an odd inch, besides the broad thumbs," replied Timothy.

"Right: she reckoned on a good snip for waste; but let no more be sent than the embroiderer calls for."

"Not a thread," grunted Dodge.

A pause ensued. Some question was evidently hesitating on the merchant's tongue. Twice did his lips move, but the word fell unuttered. The affair was, however, finally disposed of as follows:

"Hast heard of aught, Timothy, touching the private matter that I unfolded yesterday?" Cornelius put on as careless an aspect as the disquietude of his brow could needs carry, but the inquiry was evidently one of no ordinary interest. He twisted the points of his doublet, tied and untied the silk cords from his ruff, waiting Dodge's answer in a posture not much belying the anxiety he wished to conceal:

"Why, master, an' it were of woman's humours, the old seer himself could not unriddle their pranks."

Cornelius sighed, making the following hasty reply:

"Thinkest thou this same seer could not give me a lift from out my trouble?"

"This same seer, I wot," replied Dodge, "is sore perplexed: some evil and mischievous aspect doth afflict the horoscope of the nation—Mars being conjunct with Venus and the Dragon's tail. Now, look to it, master, it is no light matter that will move him; but almost or ere I showed him the first glimpse of the business he waxed furious, and said that he cared not if all the unwed hussies in Christendom were hung up in a row, like rats on a string."

"It is Kate's birthday," answered the merchant, "to-night being the feast of St. Bartlemy; but, as thou knowest well, the astrologer that cast her figure gave no hope of her amendment should this day pass and never a husband. Who would yoke with a colt untamed? O Timothy! it were well nigh to make an old man weep. I am a withered trunk. Better had I been childless than have this proud wench to trouble mine house."

The old man here wept, and it was a grievous thing to see his wrinkled cheeks become, as it were, but the sluices and channels of his tears. Timothy, too, was something moved from his common posture; and once he endeavoured to turn, as though he would hide his face from his master's trouble.

He sought to speak, but an evil and husky sort of humour settled in his throat, and he waited silently the subsiding of the sorrow he could not quell.

Cornelius raised his head; a sudden thought seemed to animate him. A ray had penetrated the gloomy envelope of his mind; and he peered through the casement intently eyeing the cool atmosphere.

"I'll visit the cunning man myself, Timothy. If he hear me not, then can I but return, weeping as I went." And with this speech he hastily departed.

Now on this, the morrow of St. Bartlemy, it so happened that Kate also arose before the usual hour, and

in a mood even more than ordinarily strange and untoward. Her maiden was like to find it a task of no slight enterprise the attempt to adorn Kate's pretty person. Not a garment would fit. She threw the whole furniture of her clothes-press on a heap and stamped on them for very rage. She looked hideous in her brown Venice waistcoat; frightful in her orange tiffany farthingale; absolutely unbearable in her black velvet hood, wire ruff, and taffety gown. So that in the end she was nigh going to bed again in the sulks, had not a jacket of crimson satin, with slashed bodice, embroidered in gold twist, taken her fancy. Her little steel mirror, not always the object of such complacency, did for once reflect a beam of good humour, which so bewitched Kate that for the next five minutes she found herself settling into the best possible temper in the world.

"Give me my kerchief, lace scarf, and green silk hood, and my petticoat with the border newly purfled. Hark! 'Tis the bell for prayers. Be quick with my pantofles: not those, wench—the yellow silk with silver spangles. Now my rings and crystal bracelets. I would not miss early matins to-day for the best jewel on an alderman's thumb."

"Anon, lady," replied her waiting-woman, with a sort of pert affectation of meekness. But what should cause Kate to be so wonderfully attentive to her devotions was a matter on which Janet could have no suspicions, or at least would not dare to show them if she had.

Kate, being now attired, tripped forth, accompanied by her maid. As she passed the half-closed door of the counting-house, Timothy, with one of his most leaden looks, full of unmeaning, stood edgeways in the opening, his lower side in advance, with the long arm ready for action.

"Fair mistress, Master Kelly would fain have a token to-day. He hath sent you a rare device!"

"And what the better shall I be of his mummeries?" hastily replied the lady. Timothy drew from his large leathern purse a curiously-twisted ribband.

"He twined this knot for your comfort. Throw it over your left shoulder, and it shall write the first letter of your gallant's name. A cypher of rare workmanship."

Kate, apparently in anger, snatched the magic ribband, and, peradventure it might be from none other design than to rid herself of the mystical love-knot, she tossed it from her with an air of great contumely, when, by some disagreeable and untoward accident, it chanced to fly over the self-same shoulder to which Timothy had referred. He made no reply, but followed the token with his little grey eyes, apparently without any sort of aim or concernment. Kate's eyes followed, too; but verily it were a marvellous thing to behold how the ribband shaped itself as it fell, and yet to see how she stamped and stormed. Quick as the burst of her proud temper she kicked aside the bauble, but not until the curl of the letter had been sufficiently manifest. Timothy drew back into his den, leaving the fair maid to the indulgence of her humours. But in the end Kate's wrath was not over-difficult to assuage. With an air somewhat dubious and disturbed she hastily thrust the token behind her stomacher and departed.

The merchant's house being nigh unto the market cross, Kate's prettily spangled feet were soon safely conducted over the low stepping-stones placed at convenient distances for the transit of foot-passengers, through the unpaved streets. Near a sort of style, guarding the entrance to the churchyard, rose an immense pile of buildings, cumbrous and uncouth. These were built something in the fashion of an inverted pyramid; to wit, the smaller area occupying the basement, and the larger spreading out into the topmost story. As she turned the corner of this vast hive of habitation—for many families were located therein—

a gay cavalier, sumptuously attired, swept round at the same moment. Man and maid stood still for one instant. With unpropitious courtesy, an unlucky gust turned aside Kate's veil of real Flanders point; and the two innocents, like silly sheep, were staring into each other's eyes without either apology or rebuke. It did seem as though Kate were not without knowledge of the courtly beau; a rich and glowing vermilion came across her neck and face, like the gorgeous blush of evening upon the cold bosom of a snow-cloud. But the youth eyed her with a cool and deliberate glance, stepping aside carelessly as he passed by. She seemed to writhe with some concealed anguish; yet her lip curled proudly, and her bosom heaved, as though striving to throw off, with one last and desperate struggle, the oppression that she endured. In this disturbed and unquiet frame did Kate pass on to her orisons.

It may be needful to pause for a brief space in our narrative, whilst we give some account of this goodly spark who had so unexpectedly, as it might seem, unfitted the lady for the due exercise of her morning devotions.

His dress was elegant and becoming, and of the most costly materials. His hat was high and tapering, encircled by a rich band of gold and rare stones. It was further ornamented by a black feather, drooping gently towards the left shoulder. The brim was rather narrow; but then a profusion of curls fell from beneath, partly hiding his lace collar of beautiful workmanship and of the newest device. His beard was small and pointed; and his whiskers displayed that graceful wave peculiar to the high-bred gallants of the age. His neck was long, and the elegant disposal of his head would have turned giddy the heads of half the dames in the Queen's court. He wore a crimson cloak, richly embroidered: this was lined throughout with blue silk, and thrown negligently on one side. His doublet was grey, with slit sleeves; the arm parts, towards the shoulder, wide

and slashed; but who shall convey an adequate idea of the brilliant green breeches, tied far below the knee with yellow ribbands, red cloth hose, and great shoe-roses? For ourselves we own our incompetence, and proceed, glancing next at his goodly person. In size he was not tall nor unwieldy, but of a reasonable stature, such as denotes health, activity, and a frame capable of great endurance. He stepped proudly along, his very gait indicating superiority.

The town gallants looked on his person with envy, and on his light rapier with mistrust. In sooth, he was a proper man for stealing a lady's heart, either in hall or bower. Many had been his victims; many were then in the last extremities of love. But of him it was currently spoken that he had never yet been subjected to its influence.

There be divers modes of falling into love. Some slip in through means of themselves; to wit, from sheer vanity, being never so well pleased as when they are the objects of admiration. Some from sheer contradiction, and from the well-known tendency of extremes to meet. Some, for very idlesse; and some for very love. But in none of these modes had the boy Cupid made arrow-holes through the heart of our illustrious hero; for, as we before intimated, no yielding place did seem visible, as the common discourse testified. How far this report was true the sequel of our history will set forth.

Now, this gay gallant being the wonder and admiration of the whole place, many were the unthrifty hours spent in such profitless discourse by the wives and daughters of the townsfolk, to the great discomfort and discredit of their liege lords. He was at present abiding in the college, where John Dee had apartments distinct from the warden's house, along with his former coadjutor and seer, Edward Kelly. Since the last quarrel between these two confederates, they had long been estranged; but Kelly had recently come for a season

to visit his old master, when the Doctor returned from Trebona, in Bohemia, whence he had been invited back to his own country by Queen Elizabeth, he having received great honours and emoluments from foreign princes. This youth, being son to the governor of the castle at Trebona, was about to travel for his improvement and understanding in foreign manners. At the suit of his parents, Dee undertook the charge of his education and safe return. Since then young Rodolf had generally resided under Dr. Dee's roof, and accompanied him on his accession to the wardenship. His accent was decidedly foreign, though he had resided some years in Britain, but not sufficiently so for Mancestrian ears to distinguish it from a sort of lisping euphuism then fashionable at court and amongst the higher ranks of society. An appearance of mystery was connected with his person. His birthplace and condition were not generally divulged, and though of an open and gallant bearing, yet on this head he was not very communicative. Mystery begets wonder and excitement—a sort of interest usually attached to subjects not easily understood. When it emanates from an object capable of enthralling the affections, this feeling soon kindles admiration, and admiration ripens into love. No wonder, then, if all tender and compassionate dames were ready to open upon him their dread artillery of sighs and glances, and the more especially as it soon began to be manifest that success was nigh hopeless. The heart entrenched, the wearer was impenetrable.

Kate's oddly assorted brain had not failed to run a-rambling at times after the gallant stranger. He had heard much of her beauty, and likewise of her uncertain humours. Each fancied the opposite party impregnable; and this alone, if none other motive had arisen, formed a sufficiently strong temptation to begin the attack. Kate was particularly punctual at church, and once or twice he caught an equivocating glance towards the

warden's seat, and he really did at times fancy he should like to play at "*taming the shrew*." Kate was sure the stranger slighted her. He treated her, and her only, with an air of neglect she could not altogether account for, and she was in great mind to make the young cavalier crouch at her feet. How this was to be contrived could only be guessed at by a woman, and we will not let the reader into all the secrets of Kate's sanctuary. Suffice it to say, that in so harmlessly attempting to beguile her prey into the snare, the lady fell over head and ears into it herself. In a word, Kate was in love! And this was the more grievous, inasmuch as her lofty bearing hitherto would not allow her to whisper the matter even to her own bosom; and the pent-up and smothering flame was making sad havoc with poor Kate's repose.

She had ofttimes suspected the state of her heart; but instead of sighing, pining, and twanging her guitar to love-sick ditties, she would fly into so violent a rage at her own folly that nothing might quell the disturbance until fairly worn out by its own vehemency. No one suspected the truth—yes, one forsooth—gentle reader, canst thou guess? It was no less a personage than our one-shouldered friend Timothy Dodge! How the cunning rogue had contrived to get at the secret is more than we dare tell. Sure enough he had it; and as certain too that another should be privy to the fact—to wit, Edward Kelly, the seer. Dodge was a fitting tool for this intriguer, and well able to help him out at a pinch.

Affairs were in this position when our story commenced. Rodolf had formidable auxiliaries at hand, had he been disposed to make the attack; but his stay was now short—Kate was petulant and perverse—the siege might be tedious. Just on the verge of relinquishing, he met Kate, as we have before seen, going to church. He caught her for the once completely off her guard, and the rich blush that ensued set a

crowd of odd fancies jingling through his brain. It was just as the old chimes were ringing their doleful chant from the steeple, but these hindered not a whit the other changes that were set a-going. Not aware of the alteration in his course, he was much amazed when he found himself striding somewhat irreverently down the great aisle of the church towards the choir, from whence the low chanting of the psalms announced that service was already begun.

It was the opening of a bright autumnal day. The softened lights streamed playfully athwart the grim and shadowy masses that lay on the chequered pavement, like the smiles of infancy sporting on the dark bosom of the tomb. The screen formed a rich foreground, in half-shadow, before the east window. The first beam of the morning, clothed in tenfold brightness, burst through the variegated tracery. Prophets, saints and martyrs shone there, gloriously portrayed in heaven's own light.

Rodolf approached the small door leading into the choir, when his vacant eye almost unconsciously alighted on a female form kneeling just within the recess. A ray, from her patron saint belike, darting through the eastern oriel, came full upon her dark and glowing eye. She turned towards the stranger, but in a moment her head was bent as lowly as before, and the ray had lost its power. Rodolf suddenly retreated. Passing through a side door, he left the church, directing his steps towards the low and dark corridors of the college. Near the entrance to his chamber, on a narrow bench, sate a well-caparisoned page tuning his lute. His attire was costly, and his raiment all redolent with the most fragrant perfume. This youth, when very young, was sent over as the companion, or rather at that time as the playmate, of his master. He was now dignified with the honourable title of page, and his affection for Rodolf was unbounded.

" Boy," said the cavalier, something moodily, " come

into the chamber. Stay—fetch me a sack-posset, prythee. I am oppressed, and weary with my morning's ramble."

Now, the boy did marvel much at his master's sudden return, but more especially at the great fatigue consequent on that short interval; knowing, too, that a particularly copious and substantial breakfast had anticipated his departure.

"And yet, Altdorff, I am not in a mood for much drink. Give us a touch of those chords. I feel sad at times, and vapourish."

They entered into a well-furnished apartment. The ceiling was composed of cross-beams curiously wrought. On one of these was represented a grim head in the act of devouring a child—which tradition affirmed was the great giant Tarquin at his morning's repast. The room was fitted up with cumbrous elegance. A few pieces of faded tapestry covered one side of the apartment. In a recess stood a tester bed, ornamented with black velvet, together with curtains of black stuff and a figured coverlet. A wainscot cupboard displayed its curiously carved doors, near to which hung two pictures, or tables as they were called, representing the fair Lucretia and Mary Magdalen. A backgammon-board lay on the window-seat; three shining, tall-backed, oaken chairs, with a table of the same well-wrought material, and irons beautifully embossed, and a striped Turkey rug, formed a sumptuous catalogue, when we consider the manner of furnishing that generally prevailed in those days.

The page sat on a corner seat beneath the window. He struck a few wild chords.

"Not that—not that, good Altdorff. It bids one linger too much on home-longings."

Here the boy's eyes glistened, and a tremulous motion of the lip showed how his heart bounded at the word.

"Prythee, give us the song thou wast conning yesterday."

The page began with a low prelude, but was again interrupted.

"Nay, 'tis not thus. Give me that wild love-ditty thou knowest so well. I did use to bid thee be silent when thou wouldest have worried mine ears with it. But in sooth the morning looks so languishing and tender that it constrains the bosom, I verily think, to its own softness."

The page seemed to throw his whole soul into the wild melody which followed this request. We give it, with a few verbal alterations, as follows:

SONG.

1.

Fair star, that beamest
In my ladye's bower,
Pale ray, that streamest
In her lonely tower;
Bright cloud, when like the eye of Heaven
Floating in depths of azure light,
Let me but on her beauty gaze
Like ye unchidden. Day and night
I'd watch, till no intruding rays
Should bless my sight.

2.

Fond breeze, that rovest
Where my ladye strays,
Odours, thou lovest
Wafting to her praise;
Lone brook, that with soft music bubblest,
Chaining her soul to harmony;
Let me but round her presence steal
Like ye unseen, a breath I'd be,
Content none other joy to feel
Than circling thee!

"In good sooth, thou canst govern the cadence well. Thou hast more skill of love than thine age befits.

But, mayhap, 'tis thy vocation, boy. Hast thou had visitors betimes this morning ? "

" None, good master, but Kelly."

" What of him ? "

" Some business that waited your return. I thought you had knowledge of the matter."

" Are there any clients astir so early at his chamber, thinkest thou ? "

" None, save the rich merchant that dwells hard by, Cornelius Ethelstoun."

" Cornelius ! " repeated the cavalier, in a disturbed and inquiring tone—" hath he departed ? "

" Nay, I heard not his footsteps since I watched the old man tapping warily at the prophet's door."

Rodolf hastily replaced his hat, and his short and impatient rap was heard at the seer's chamber.

It occupied the north-eastern angle of the building, in the gloomiest part of the house ; overlooking, on one side, a small courtyard, barricaded by walls and battlements of stout masonry, along which were ridges of long rank grass waving in all the pride of uncropped luxuriance. Another window overlooked the dark-flowing Irk, lazily rolling beneath the perpendicular rock on which the college was built—the very site of the once formidable station of Mancunium, the heart and centre of the Roman power in that vast district.

No answer being rendered to this hasty summons, Rodolf raised the latch, but marvelled not a little when he beheld the room apparently deserted. Voices were, however, heard in the inner apartment. Ere he could well draw back the door slowly opened, nor could he avoid hearing the following termination to some weighty conference.

" An hundred broad pieces—good ! Ere night, thou sayest ? "

" Ere the curfew," replied Cornelius.

" Look thee—'tis but a slender space for mine art to work, and ——" The seer, as he uttered this with

great solemnity, entered the antechamber. The gallant stood there, just meditating a retreat. A flush of anger and confusion passed for a moment over Kelly's visage. Quickly recovering his self-possession, with a severe aspect, he stood before the intruder.

"Art come to listen or to watch?" abruptly interrogated the seer. "Both be rare accomplishments truly, for a youth of thy breeding."

"Nay, good Master Kelly; I came but at thy bidding, and mine ears are not the heavier or the wiser for what they have heard, I trow."

"I thought thee safe at morning prayers."

"Nay," replied Rodolf. "There be too many bright eyes and blushing cheeks for the seasoning of a man's devotions."

"Cornelius, thou mayest retire. What mine art can compass shall not be lacking at thy need."

The merchant, with a profound obeisance, withdrew. The seer adjusted his beard, carefully brushed the down from his velvet cap, and sate for a while as if abstracted from all outward intercourse. His keen, quick eye became fixed, its lustre imperceptibly waning. A cloud seemed to pass gradually over his sharp features, until their expression was absorbed, giving place to a look of mere lifeless inanity. A spectator might have fancied himself gazing at a sage of some remote era, conjured up from his dark resting-place. The wand of death seemed to have withered his shrunk visage for ages under the dim shadow of the grave.

Rodolf, aware that he was not to be interrupted when the gift was upon him, waited patiently the result of the seer's revelations. A considerable time had elapsed when the cloud began to roll away. His features gradually reassumed the attributes of life, as each separately felt the returning animation. His eyes rested full on the cavalier.

"I have had a vision, Rodolf."

"To me is it not spoken?" inquired the youth.

"Yes, to thee!" The seer said this in a tone so hollow and energetic, and with a look of such thrilling awe, that even Rodolf shuddered. He seemed to feel his glance.

"Listen. The spirit warned me thus:

"'The stranger that hither comes o'er the broad sea
Shall wed on the night of St. Bartlemy.'"

"Nay, Master Kelly, thine art faileth this once, forsooth. To-night is the saint's vigil, yet lurk I not in the beam of a woman's favour; and ere another year I may be cured of the simples at my father's dwelling in the old castle."

"The vision hath spoken, and it setteth not forth idle tales. Come to me anon, I will anoint and prepare my beryl and my divining mirror. Thou shalt thyself behold some of the mysteries touching which I have warned thee beforetime. About noon return to my chamber."

Rodolf withdrew into his own apartment. His countenance looked anxious and disturbed. He sat down, but his restlessness seemed to increase. His posture was not the most easy and graceful that might be desired, nor calculated to set off his personal advantages, though now become the more needful, if, as the seer predicted, he should wive ere night—albeit his bride were yet unsought—nor wooed, nor won! Nothing could be more destructive to that easy self-satisfaction, that seductive and insinuating carriage, so essential to the fine gentleman of every age. There was a sort of angular irregularity in his movements, neither pleasant nor becoming; and his agitation so far overcame his better breeding that he really did cram his beard between at least three of his fingers. His rapier had, moreover, poked its way through his cloak, and the bright shoe-roses were nigh ruined from the sudden crossings and disarrangements they had undergone. A considerable

time had now elapsed ; in the meanwhile his impatience had risen to an alarming height, insomuch that we would not have answered for the safety of his red cloth hose and silken doubtlet, had not noon been happily announced.

Raising the latch of the seer's chamber with considerable eagerness, he found the room completely dark. An unseen hand led him to a seat. Soon he heard a low murmuring chant, as though from voices at a remote distance. By degrees the words grew more articulate, shaping themselves into the same quaint distich that Kelly had repeated :

> " The stranger that hither comes o'er the broad sea
> Shall wed on the night of St. Bartlemy."

This was answered in a voice of considerable pathos ; a burst of soft music filling up the interval. Gradually the eye began to feel sensible of the presence of surrounding objects, though in the ordinary way nothing could be distinguished ; a faculty peculiarly sensitive with the loss of sight, and not quite dormant in the general mass of mankind. A faint gleam was soon perceptible, like the first blush of morning, apparently on the opposite side of the chamber. Becoming brighter, flashes of a dim, rainbow-coloured light crept slowly by, like the aurora sweeping over an illuminated cloud. Suddenly he saw, or his eyes deceived him, a female form shaping itself from these chaotic elements. But it was observed only during the short intervals when the beams seemed to kindle with unusual brightness. Every flash, however, rendered the appearance more distinct. Dazzled and bewildered, the heated senses were become the victims of their own credulity, the mind receiving back its own reactions. Taking its impression probably from the occurrences of the morning, the eye rapidly moulded the figure into the likeness of Kate. Her eyes were turned upon him, beaming

with that soft and melting expression he had so recently beheld. It was but momentary, or he could have persuaded himself that she looked on him with an air the most tender and compassionate. Never did fancy portray her in a form so lovely. Deep and indelible was the impression ; and though it might be

> " The imagination
> Become impregnate with her own desire."

yet she had performed her office well. Not all the realities, all the blandishments that woman ever displayed, even the most resistless, could have wrought half so dexterously or gained such swift access to the heart. The vision faded, and a momentary darkness ensued. Suddenly a blaze of light irradiated the apartment. Rodolf beheld, for one short glimpse, a Gothic hall. Kate was there, and a lover kneeling at her feet. Madness seized him, agonizing and intense. In vain he sought the features of his tormentor ; the vision had departed, and with it his repose.

A new and overwhelming emotion had overpowered him. It arose with the speed and impetuosity of a whirlwind. All just and sober anticipation, reflections, possibilities, and a thousand calm resolves, were swept as bubbles before the full burst of the torrent.

His first impulse was to seek his mistress. But—she had another lover ! The bare possibility of this event came o'er his bosom like the icy chill of the grave. He shuddered as it passed ; but the pang was too keen to return with the same intensity.

Soon a low murmur, like the distant sough of the wind, gradually approached. A faint light flashed through the chamber. He saw his own wild woods and the distant castle. It was just visible, dimly outlined on the horizon, as he had last beheld it in the cold grey beam that accompanied his departure. It arose tranquilly on his spirit. The voice of other years visited

his soul. His eyes filled—he could have wept in the very overflowing of his delight. He dashed his hand across his forehead; but the pageant had disappeared.

Daylight once more shone into the apartment; but nothing was discerned, save a dark curtain concealing one extremity of the room, and the seer sitting at his elbow.

"Boy, what sawest thou?" said Kelly, not raising his head as he spoke, but intently poring over a grim volume of cabalistic symbols.

"In troth, I am hard put to it, Master Kelly. The maid I have just seen is accounted the veriest shrew in the parish, and one whom no man may approach with a safe warranty. I am like to lose all hope of wiving, if this be the maiden I am to woo. And yet——" The form of the comely suitor he had seen kneeling at her feet just then flashed on his mind, yet cared he not to show the seer how much the phantom had disturbed him.

"Idle tales!" said Kelly. "I wot not but half the gay gallants in the town would give the best jewel in their caps to have one sweet look, one pretty smile from her cruel mouth. 'Tis but the report of those whom she hath slighted with loathing and contempt that hath raised this apprehension in her disfavour. The churls know not what is hidden beneath this outward habit of her perverse nature, and she careth not to discover. Should some youth of noble bearing and condition but woo her as she deserves thou shouldest see her tamed, ay, and loving, too, as the very idol of her worship, or I would forfeit my best gift."

"But she hath a lover!" said Rodolf, gravely.

"Peradventure she hath, but not of her own choosing, or mine art fails me. Look, this figure is the horoscope of her birth. Thou hast some knowledge of the celestial sciences. The directions are so close worked that should this night pass and Kate go unwed—indicated by Venus coming to a trine of the sun on the cusp of the seventh

house, she will refuse all her suitors, and her whole patrimony pass into the hands of a stranger ; " but "—he raised his voice with a solemn and emphatic enunciation—" to-night ! look to it ! If not thine she may be another's."

The listener's brain seemed in a whirl ; thought hurrying on thought, until the mind lost all power of discrimination. The succession of images was too rapid. All individuality was gone. He felt as though not one idea was left out of the busy crowd on which to rest his own identity. He seemed a mere passive existence, unable either to execute the functions of thought or volition.

" Go, for a brief space. Thou mayest return at sunset. Yet "—the seer fixed a penetrating glance on the youth as he retired—" go not nigh the merchant's dwelling, unless thou wouldest mar thy fortune. To-night—remember ! "

In the dim solitude of his chamber Rodolf sought in vain to allay the feverish excitement he had endured. He seemed left to the sport and caprice of a power he could not control. The coursers of the imagination grew wilder with restraint ; he recklessly flung the reins upon their neck ; but this did not tire their impetuosity. His brain glowed like a furnace ; he seemed hastening fast on to the verge of either folly or madness. He threw himself on the couch, when the voice of Altdorff came like a winged harmony upon his spirit. The page was seated in the narrow cloisters—the lute, his untiring companion, enticing a few chords from his touch, playful and gentle as the feelings that awaked them ; some old and quaint chant, scarce worth the telling, but cherished in the heart's inmost shrine, from the hallowed nature of its associations. A deep slumber crept heavily on the cavalier, but the merchant's daughter still haunted him : sometimes snatched away from his embrace just as a rosy smile was kindling on her lips ; at others, she met him with frowns and menace, but ere

he could speak to her she had disappeared. Then was he tottering on the battlements of some old turret, when a storm arose ; the maiden crept to his side, but in an instant, with a hideous crash, she was borne away by the rude grasp of the tempest. He awoke with a mortifying discovery that the crash had been of a somewhat less equivocal nature. A cabinet of costly workmanship lay overturned at his feet, and a rich vase, breathing odours, strewed the floor in a thousand fragments.

The noise brought up several of the college servitors ; to rid himself from the annoyance he ascended the roof, then protected by low battlements and leaded, so that a person might walk round the building and pursue his meditations without interruption.

On this day, teeming with events, Dr. Dee had been too closely engaged in parish duties to give heed to these love fancies, and even had he been ever so free to exercise his judgment in the matter, it is more than likely Rodolf would not have opened to him the proceedings then afoot. He well knew that the Doctor yet bore no good-will to Kelly, and might possibly thwart his designs, to the undoing of any good purposed by the strange transactions that had already occurred ; he resolved, therefore, to let this day pass ere he opened his lips on the subject.

But how to while away the hours until evening was a most embarrassing problem. Sleep he had tried, but he found no wish to repeat the experiment ; reading was just then foreign to his humour ; mathematics must, that day, go unstudied. After beating time to at least a dozen strange metres, he hit upon the happy contrivance of writing a love-song, as a kind of expedient to restore the equilibrium. He was rather unskilled at the work ; but the pen becomes eloquent when the soul moves it. We will, however, leave him at this thrifty employment, having no design, gentle reader, to make the occasion as wearisome to thee as to himself. Having the power to annihilate both time and space,

let us watch the round sun, as he threw his last look, that evening, on the scene of this marvellous history. The old walls of the college and the church tower were invested with a gorgeous apparel of light, as though illumined for some gay festival, some season of rejoicing, when gladness shines out visibly in the shape of bonfires and torches. But few moments elapsed ere the love-sick youth was again admitted into the dark interior of the seer's dwelling.

A voice whispered in his ear :

" Not a word, hardly a breath, as thou wouldest thrive in thy pursuit. There be spirits abroad, not of earth, nor air. Be silent and discreet."

A ray suddenly darted across the room. Again the voice was at his ear :

" Hold thine eye to the crevice when the light enters, and mark well what thou beholdest."

Again he saw his mistress, apparently in a vaulted chamber, lighted by a single lamp : she sat as if anxious and disturbed, her cheek pale and flushed by turns, whilst her eye wandered hurriedly around the room. Someone approached ; it was the seer. Rodolf heard him speak.

" Maiden, hast thou a lover ? "

The sound seemed scarcely akin to that of human speech. It rose heavily and deep, as from the charnel-house, as if the grim and cold jaws of the grave could utter a voice—the dreary echoes of the tomb ! The seer's lips were motionless, whilst he thus continued in the same sepulchral tone :

" I know thou hast. 'Tis here thy love would tend." He drew a richly-set miniature from his bosom. It was mounted in so peculiar a fashion that Rodolf started back with the first emotion of surprise. The miniature was his own ; a gem newly from the artist, and which he had left, as he thought, in safe custody a short time ago. The voice again whispered in his ear, " Beware."

He subdued the expression of wonder just rising on his lip, watching the issue with increased interest.

Kate covered her face. She had just glanced at the picture, and her proud bosom heaved almost to bursting.

"Look, disdainful woman! and though thy bosom be formed for love, yet wouldest thou spurn it from thee. I *know* thou lovest him. Nay, chide not; thy brow cannot blast me with its thunders. Go to! I could, by mine art, so humble thee, set thy love so exquisitely on its desire, that thou shouldest lay thy proud womanhood aside—sue and crouch, even if 'twere for blows, like a tame spaniel! I have thee in my power, and were not the natural bent of thy dispositions kind and noble-hearted, yet sore beset, and, as it were, overwhelmed by thy curst humours, I had now cast my spells about thee—ay, stricken thee to the dust! Shake off these bonds that enthrall thy better spirit, and let not that beautiful fabric play the hypocrite any longer. Why should so fair a temple be the dwelling of a demon?"

A deep sob here told that kindlier feelings were at work; that nature was beginning to assert her prerogative, and that the common sympathies, the tender attributes, of woman were not extinguished.

The struggle was short, but severe. With difficulty she repressed the outburst of her grief as she spoke.

"A woman still! 'Tis the garb nature put on. I have wrapped a sterner garment about me." A long and bitter sob here betrayed the violent warfare within. It was but for a moment. Affecting contempt for her own weakness, she exclaimed:

"Throw it off? Expose me defenceless to his proud contumely? Even now the cold glance of indifference hath pierced it through!"

Here she arose proudly.

"And what thinkest thou, if I were to stand unarmed, uncovered, before his unfeeling gaze?"

"He loves thee," hastily rejoined the seer.

"Me!—as soon that bauble learn to love as——"

"Say but one word, and I will bow him at thy feet."

"'Tis well thou mockest me thus. To worm out my secret, perchance. For this didst thou crave my presence? Let me be gone!"

"Thou shalt say 'YES,' Kate, ere thou depart!"

The curtain which divided the apartment suddenly flew aside. The astonished lover beheld his mistress: not the unreal phantom he had imagined, but a being substantial in quality, and of a nature like his own, though gentler than his fondest anticipations.

The seer departed; but in the end the lovers were not displeased at being betrayed into a mutual expression of their regard.

The operation of the heavenly influences was, in these days, a doctrine that obtained almost universal credit; and it would have been looked upon as a daring piece of presumption to baffle the prophetic signification of the stars.

On that same night, being the eve of St. Bartholomew, they were married: thus adding one more to the numerous instances on record where a belief in the prediction has been the means of its accomplishment.

The remainder of Kate's history, and how she crossed the sea, accompanied by her husband, into the wilds of Bohemia, living there for a space; and how she afterwards returned into her own land, will be set forth at some more fitting opportunity.

THE EARL OF TYRONE

" Still the fairest are his fuell,
When his days are to be cruell ;
Lovers' hearts are all his food ;
And his baths their warmest blood ;
Nought but wounds his hands doth season,
And he hates none like to reason."

A Hue and Cry after Cupid.—Ben Jonson.

The dark and romantic history of the Earl of Tyrone would of itself occupy a larger space than these volumes afford. The following episode, connected with his concealment in the neighbourhood of Rochdale, the author does not presume to bring forward as a fact. Yet there are good reasons for supposing that it formed an important era in his life, and was followed very soon after by the Queen's pardon. The importance of this measure may be conceived, when by some Elizabeth's depression, and the profound melancholy she exhibited in her latter hours, were attributed to this source. It is said that she repented of having pronounced his forgiveness ; that having always resolved to bring him to condign punishment, she could receive no satisfaction from his submission ; while the advantages of her high estate, and all the glories of a prosperous reign, were unable to alleviate her disappointment.

The following is a brief sketch of his life, extracted from generally received authorities.

Hugh O'Neale was nephew to Shan O'Neale, or the Great O'Neale, as he was more commonly called, well-known for his eminent courage, a virtue much esteemed by the half-civilized hordes whom he commanded. He was created Earl of Tyrone by the Queen ; but disliking this servitude, and wishful to liberate his country from the English yoke, he entered into a correspondence with Spain ; procured from thence a supply of arms and am-

munition; and having united many of the Irish chiefs in a dependence upon himself, he began to be regarded as a formidable enemy.

The English found much difficulty in pursuing the rebels into the bogs, woods and other fastnesses to which they retreated. Sir John Norris, who commanded the English army, was rendered thereby more willing to hearken to the proposals made by Tyrone, and the war was spun out by these artifices for some years. Sir John dying, as reported, of vexation and discontent, he was succeeded by Sir Henry Bagnall. "He advanced to the relief at Blackwater, then besieged by the enemy, but was surrounded in disadvantageous ground. His soldiers, discouraged by part of their powder accidentally taking fire, were put to flight; and though the pursuit was stopped by Montacute, who commanded the English horse, fifteen hundred men, together with the general himself, were left dead upon the spot. This victory, so unusual to the Irish, roused their courage, supplied them with arms and munitions of war, and raised the renown of Tyrone, who was hailed as deliverer of his country and patron of Irish liberty."*

The unfortunate Essex was afterwards appointed to the command; but his troops were so terrified at the reputation of Tyrone that many of them counterfeited sickness, and others deserted, fearful of encountering the forces of that daring chief. Finding himself in a great measure deserted, "he hearkened to a message from Tyrone, who desired a conference; and a plain near the two camps was appointed for this purpose. The two generals met without any attendants. A river ran between them, into which Tyrone entered to his saddle-girth, but Essex stood on the opposite bank."

At this meeting, where "Tyrone behaved with great submission to the lord-lieutenant, a cessation of arms was agreed on.† Essex also received a proposal of peace, into which Tyrone had inserted many unreasonable and exorbitant conditions; and there appeared afterwards some reason to suspect that the former had commenced a very unjustifiable correspondence with the enemy." From

* Cox, p. 415. † Sydney's Letters.

this time the beam of Essex's favour was obscured, the issue terminating in his death and disgrace. In the meantime, Tyrone had thought proper to break the truce, " and joining with O'Donnel and others, overran almost the whole kingdom. He pretended to be the champion of the Catholic faith, and openly exulted in the present of a phœnix plume, which Clement VIII., in order to encourage him in the prosecution of so good a cause, had consecrated, and conferred upon him."* Essex being recalled, the Queen appointed Mountjoy as lord-deputy. " He found the island in a desperate condition ; but being a man of capacity and vigour, he immediately advanced against Tyrone in Ulster. He penetrated into the heart of that country, the chief seat of the rebels. He fortified Derry and Mount Norris. He chased them from the field, and obliged them again to shelter in woods and morasses ; and by these promising enterprises he gave new life to the Queen's authority throughout the island."

Tyrone, however, still boasted that he was certain of receiving the promised aid from Spain ; " and everything was put in condition for resisting the Spanish invasion, which was daily expected. The deputy, informed of the danger to which the southern provinces were exposed, left the prosecution of the war against Tyrone, who was now reduced to great extremities, and marched with his army into Munster."

" At last the Spaniards, under Don Juan d'Aquila, arrived at Kinsale ; and Sir Richard Piercy, who commanded in the town with a small garrison of one hundred and fifty men, found himself obliged to abandon it on their appearance. These invaders amounted to four thousand, and the Irish discovered a strong propensity to join them, in order to free themselves from the English government, with which they were extremely discontented. One chief ground of their complaint was the introduction of trials by jury,† an institution abhorred by that people, though nothing contributes more to the support of that equity and liberty for which the English laws are so justly celebrated. The Irish also bore a great favour to the Spaniards,

* Camden. † Camden.

TYRONE'S BED, NEAR ROCHDALE.

having entertained the opinion that they themselves were descended from that nation; and their attachment to the Catholic religion proved a new cause of affection for the invaders. D'Aquila assumed the title of general in this '*holy war*' for the preservation of the faith in Ireland; and he endeavoured to persuade the people that Elizabeth was, by several bulls of the Pope, deprived of her crown; that her subjects were absolved from their oaths of religion, and that the Spaniards were come to deliver the Irish from the dominion of the devil.* Mountjoy found it necessary to act with vigour, in order to prevent a total insurrection of the Irish; and having collected his forces, he formed the siege of Kinsale by land, while Sir Richard Levison, with a small squadron, blockaded it by sea. He had no sooner begun his operations than he heard of the arrival of another body of two thousand Spaniards under the command of Alphonso Ocampo, who had taken possession of Baltimore and Berehaven; and he was obliged to detach Sir George Carew to oppose their progress. Tyrone, meanwhile, with Randal, Mac Surley Tirel, Baron of Kelly, and other chieftains of the Irish, had joined Ocampo with all their forces, and were marching to the relief of Kinsale. The deputy, informed of their designs by intercepted letters, made preparations to receive them; and being reinforced by Levison with six hundred marines, he posted his troops on an advantageous ground which lay on the passage of the enemy, leaving some cavalry to prevent a sally from D'Aquila and the Spanish garrison. When Tyrone, with a detachment of Irish and Spaniards, approached, he was surprised to find the English so well posted and ranged for battle, and he immediately sounded a retreat; but the deputy gave orders to pursue him, and having thrown these advanced troops into confusion, he followed them to the main body, which he also attacked and put to flight, with the slaughter of twelve hundred men.† Ocampo was taken prisoner; Tyrone fled to Ulster; O'Donnel made his escape into Spain; and D'Aquila, finding himself reduced to the greatest difficulties, was obliged to capitulate upon such terms as the deputy prescribed to him. He sur-

* Camden, p. 645. † Winwood, vol. i. p. 369.

rendered Kinsale and Baltimore, and agreed to evacuate the kingdom. This great blow, joined to other successes gained by Wilmot, governor of Kerry, and by Roger and Gavin Harvey, threw the rebels into dismay, and gave a prospect of the final reduction of Ireland."

The remaining part of Tyrone's history may be gathered from the narrative.

Among other memorable incidents illustrative of his character, it is said that Tyrone, appearing in person to execute a treaty, immediately on the issue of some sanguinary engagement, was requested to sign the terms. "Here is my signature," said he, laying his bloody hand on the deed: "'tis the mark of the Kings of Ulster." Hence, tradition gravely asserts, was the origin of "the bloody hand," the arms of Ulster! That such a derivation is fabulous we need not attempt to prove.

WHAT a paradox is love!—the most selfish and yet the most disinterested of the passions; the gentlest and yet the most terrible of impulses that can agitate the human bosom; the most ennobling and the most humble; the most enduring and the most transient; slow as the most subtle venom to its work, yet impetuous in its career as the tornado or the whirlwind; sportive as the smile of infancy, and appalling as the maniac's shriek or the laugh of his tormentor. 'Tis a joy nursed in the warm glow of hope; but who shall reveal the depths of its despair? 'Twas given to man as his best boon—his most precious gift; but his own hands polluted the shrine—marred the beauteous and holy deposit. The loveliest image was then smitten with deformity, and that passion, the highest and noblest that could animate his bosom, became the bane of his happiness, the destroyer of his peace, and the source whence every attribute of woe hath sprung to afflict and darken the frail hopes of humanity. This may be the dark side of the picture; but unless the breath of heaven sanctify even the purest affections of our nature, they are a

withering blast, blighting its fairest verdure—a torment and a curse!

The following narrative, floating but indistinctly on the author's memory, and in all probability attached to other names in localities widely apart, is yet, he believes, true as to the more important particulars. The site of a few cottages in a romantic dell in the neighbourhood of Rochdale is still associated with the memory of the unfortunate Earl of Tyrone. It is yet called "Tyrone's Bed." In history, this noble chief is depicted in colours the most hideous and detestable; but had a son of Erin been the painter, we should have had to contemplate a different portrait. By his countrymen he was held in the most profound reverence and respect. Beloved by all, he was hailed as the expected deliverer of his native land from wrong and oppression. The most bigoted of his persecutors cannot deny that oppression, the most foul and inhuman, did exist; and the men who took up arms for the rescue of their brethren may be pitied, if not pardoned, for their noble, elevated, and enduring spirit. Let us not be misunderstood as the advocates of rebellion; but surely there are occasions when the galling yoke of oppression may be too heavy to sustain—when the crushed reptile may, writhing, turn against him who tramples on it. Let us not do this wrong, even to our enemies, by refusing to admire in them the disinterestedness and magnanimity which in others would have ensured our admiration and applause.

About a mile from the spot we have just named stood the ancient mansion of Grislehurst. Surrounded on every side by dark and almost trackless woods, sprung through a long line of ancestry from primeval forests, it reposed in undisturbed seclusion, still and majestic as the proud swan that basked upon the dark lake before it, secure from intrusion and alarm. Gable-ends and long casements broke the low piebald front into a variety of detail—a combination of effect throwing an

air of picturesque beauty on the whole, which not all the flimsy and frittered "Gothic" can convey to the mansions of modern antiques. For the timber employed in its erection a forest must have been laid prostrate. Huge arched fire-places; chimney-pieces carved with armorial bearings; oak tables absolutely joisted to sustain their vast bulk; bedsteads that would not have groaned with the weight of a Titan;—the whole intended to oppose a ponderous resistance to the ravages of time and fashion. Not a vestige is left. Those laughing halls echo no more with the loud and boisterous revel; the music of the "many twinkling" feet is gone; scarcely a stone is left upon its fellow; a few straggling trees alone mark the site. The beach and willow are waving o'er its hearth! Who would build for the destroyer? And yet man, with the end of these vanities in prospect, daily, hourly still builds on; his schemes and his projects extending through the long vista of succeeding ages, as though his dwelling were eternal, and his own fabric should survive the ruin and the doom of all!

A long train of ancestors bearing the name of Holt occupied this dwelling as the family mansion. The manor of Spotland, forfeited by the rebellion of Paslew, Abbot of Whalley, was granted by Henry the Eighth to Thomas Holt, afterwards knighted in Scotland by Edward, Earl of Hertford, in the thirty-sixth year of the reign of that monarch. The present possessor of the same name, grandson to Sir Thomas, resided at Grislehurst during the latter part of Elizabeth's reign and that of James. He married Constance, the daughter of Sir Edward Littleton of Pillaton Hall, Stafford. One son, Francis, and a daughter named Constance, were the fruit of this union. At the commencement of our narrative he had been for some years a widower, and his son was then absent on foreign travel.

It was in the memorable year 1603, the last of Elizabeth. The rebellion in Ireland had been smothered,

if not extinguished; and the great O'Neale, Earl of Tyrone and King of Ulster, together with many other chiefs, were forced to remain concealed in woods and morasses. Outlawed and outcast, some of them crossed over into England, remaining there until pardoned by the Queen.

Constance was now in her nineteenth year. Bright as her own morn of life, she had seen but few clouds in that season of hope and delight. Sorrow was to her scarce known, save in the nursery tales and wild ballads of the surrounding district. When the glowing morn was overcast, she was unprepared, unfitted for the change. The storm came, and the little sum of her happiness, launched on this frail and perishing bark, was wrecked without a struggle!

One evening, in the full glare of a dazzling sunset, the light streaming like a shower through the dark foliage of the valley, she had loitered, along with her old nurse, in the dell to which we have before alluded. The glowing atmosphere was just fading into the dewy tint which betokens a fair morrow. To enjoy a more extended gaze upon the clouds, those gorgeous vestures of the sun, Constance had ascended, by a winding path, to the edge of a steep cliff overhanging the river. She stood for some minutes looking towards the west, unconscious of the loose and slippery nature of the materials beneath her feet, and of her near approach to the brink. On a sudden the ground gave way, and she was precipitated headlong into the river! Nurse Agnes, who stood below, watching her young mistress, not without apprehension as to the consequences of her temerity, was stricken motionless with horror. There seemed to be no help. Fast receding from all hope of succour, Constance was borne rapidly down the stream.

Suddenly, with the swiftness of a deer from the brake, a figure bounded from an opposite thicket. He seemed scarcely to leave his footmarks on the long herbage ere he gained the river's brink. Plunging into the cur-

rent he succeeded in rescuing the maiden from her perilous condition. He laid her gently on the bank, beckoning to her attendant, and was speedily out of sight. The aged Agnes, with trembling hands, relieved Constance by loosening the folds from her throat; and almost ere she had wrung out the water from the raven locks of her inanimate mistress, the stranger returned. He carried a cordial, with which he moistened her lips; the old woman chafed her temples, resorting to the usual modes of resuscitation then in practice; and in the end, Constance opened her eyes. A heavy sob accompanied this effort. She looked wildly round, when she met the deep gaze of the stranger. With a faint shriek, she hid her face in the bosom of her attendant, who, overjoyed at her recovery, could scarcely refrain from falling at the feet of her deliverer. She turned to express her thanks, but he was gone.

It was not long ere several domestics, alarmed at their absence, came in search; and Constance, borne gently along, was soon restored to her anxious parent. But he looked thoughtful and disturbed when the stranger's person was described, evidently averse to hold any communication on the subject. Nurse Agnes grew eloquent in his praise, until the following conversation that same evening in the kitchen turned aside the current of her opinions.

"A rough grey cloak, gossip, thou sayest?" again enquired a hard-featured hind from the chimney-corner.

"I tell thee a cloak, and a cap turned up in front. He doused it off nobly, and took to the water like a spaniel!"

"Why, 'tis the wild man of the woods!" said another listener, who had hitherto been silent, but whose remark seemed to strike terror into the whole group. They looked round as if anticipating a visit from this fearful personage. Dame Agnes crossed herself, and muttered

her prayers with great despatch ; and something was at length audible and articulate, as follows :

" Mercy on me ! my days are numbered. If it should indeed be this incarnate—forgive the thought !—we are all dead creatures. The very horses and kine stagger, and fall into fits at times, when they come home, and it is all along of 'em having seen or smelt the brimstone from the pit. Davy had two died last week, and he was sure they had either seen the deil or his deputy—this same grey man of the woods. Woe's me that I should ha' lived to behold this child of perdition ! " The old woman here gave way to an outburst of sorrow that prevented any further disclosures.

" It is about a three month agone since this same wild man was first seen," said the old seneschal, whose office, though of little use, was still filled up in the more ancient establishments. " I saw him myself once, but I shook until the very flesh seemed to crawl over my bones. They say he neither eats nor drinks, but is kept alive in the body by glamour and witchcraft. He'll stay here until his time is done, and then his tormentors will fetch him to his prison-house again. Ye should not have tarried in the wood after sunset."

" That would I not," sharply replied Agnes ; " but the child, poor thing, would look at the daylight as it lingered on the hill-top, and I thought no harm in't."

" Like enough. He dares not abroad, if so much as the value or size of my thumb-nail of the sun's rim were left above the hill ! "

" Come, Gaffer, strike up a merry trowl," said a thin, squeaking voice, from a personage almost hidden behind a copious supper of broken meat and pastry. But whether the party thus addressed was too much alarmed to let the current of his spirit run bubbling from the spring of either mirth or minstrelsy or he was too deeply buried in his own thoughts, it were needless to enquire. The request for a while passed by unheeded.

Gaffer Gee was the ballad-monger of the whole district.

He kept on a comfortable and vagabond sort of existence by visiting the different mansions where good cheer was to be had, and where he was generally a welcome guest, both in bower and hall. His legendary lore seemed inexhaustible ; and, indeed, his memory was like an old chest full of scraps continually rummaged. He knew all the scandal and family secrets throughout the parish, and had a quick eye at detecting either a love affair or a feud. He composed a number of the wild ballads that he sang or recited, or at least put them into that jingling and quaint rhythm, acquired by habitual intercourse with the phraseology peculiar to these popular descants. On hearing a story he could readily shape it into verse, extempore, too, upon occasion ; and many were the jokes that rebounded from his theme, whether in hall or kitchen. It was pleasant to watch his little grey eye, and the twinkling lashes, as they rose and fell, varying the expression of his lips. A slight lisp gave an air of simplicity to his ditties, which never failed to charm his auditors. He could throw the simplest expression over his features, which made the keen edge of his rebukes infinitely more cutting and effective. But the prevailing tone of feeling in him was sad and oppressive. These wandering minstrels had, from remote ages, been held as seers, and a peep into futurity was often supposed to accompany their poetical inspirations—a superstition not confined to any particular locality, but obtaining a widely disseminated belief in all climes and nations where imagination assumes her sway and dares to assert her power.

After a short space, and without any invitation, the ballad-maker, like some Pythian priestess on her tripod, began to exhibit manifestations of the *afflatus*. The spirit of song seemed to be stealing upon him, and in a moment the listening auditory were still. In substance, he half recited, half sung, the following ballad :

"'Maiden, braid those tresses bright,
Wreathe thy ringlets from the blast;
Why those locks of curling light
Heedless to the rude winds cast?

"'Maiden, why that darkened brow?
From those eyes, once dimmed with weeping,
Lurid gleams are gathering now,
O'er their pale wan shadows creeping.'

"Silent still the maid passed by,
Near nor voice nor footstep came.
Sudden cleaving earth and sky,
Flashed a brand of arrowy flame!

"'Maiden, turn that gaze on me,
Onwards why so madly bent?'
Still no stay, no pause made she
Through that kindling element.

. . . . . .

"Now the midnight chant is stealing,
Mass and requiem breathing near;
Hushed the blast, as if revealing
Sounds to earth that Heaven might hear.

"From yon pile, soft voices swelling
Dirge and anthem for the dead;—
Demon shrieks, their lost doom yelling,
Tend Lord Rudolph's dying bed.

"Holy men, with song and prayer,
Fain would shrive the passing soul;
Fiend-like whispers to his ear,
Winds, in muttering curses, roll.

"Ere his last lone shuddering cry,
To his couch the maiden came;
On his breast she silently
Bent an eye of ravening flame.

" One wild shriek the sufferer sent,
Ere life's last frail link might sever ;
Laughed the maiden, as she leant
O'er that form, to cling for ever.

" Closer to his heart she pressed ;
Scorched, the quivering flesh recoiled ;
Unconsumed his burning breast,
While that grim tormentor smiled.

" ' Now revenge ! ' the maiden cried,
' I have bartered heaven for this ;
Mine thou art, proud Rudolph's bride,
Mine by this last demon kiss.'

" Tower, and battlement, and hall,
Scathed as with the thunder-stroke,
Flashed through midnight's dusky pall,
Twined in wreaths of livid smoke.

" O'er that gulph of yawning flame
Horrid shapes are hovering ;
Monstrous forms, of hideous name,
To the bridal-bed they bring.

" ' They come !—they come ! ' their frantic yell,
On a wave of billowy light
Sudden rose (so marvellers tell)
The maiden and her traitor knight.

" The moon looks bright on Rudolph's towers,
The breeze laughs lightly by,
But dark and silent sleep the hours,
The lone brook murmuring nigh.

" The lank weed waves round thy domain,
The fox creeps to thy gate ;
Dark is thy dwelling, proud chieftain,
Thy halls are desolate ! "

The legend we have thus rendered. His own idiom and versification, as we have already observed, were of a more unintelligible sort, though better suited, perhaps, to the fashion of the time and the capacity of his hearers.

But a gloom still pervaded the once cheerful hearth, and the night wore on without the usual symptoms of mirth and hilarity.

Holt of Grislehurst held the manorial rights and was feudal lord over a widely-extended domain, the manor of Spotland descending to him by succession from his grandfather. His character was that of a quiet, unostentatious country gentleman; but withal of a proud spirit, not brooking either insult or neglect. This night an unaccountable depression stole upon him. He strode rapidly across the chamber, moody and alone. The taper was nigh extinguished; the wasted billet grew pale, a few sparks starting up the chimney, as the wind roared in short and hasty gusts round the dwelling. The old family portraits seemed to flit from their dark panels, wavering with the tremulous motion of the blaze.

Holt was still pacing the chamber with a disturbed and agitated step. A few words, rapid and unconnected, fell from his lips.

"Rebel!—Outcast! I cannot betray thee!"

"Betray me!" echoed a voice from behind. Turning, the speaker stood before him. It was the athletic form of the stranger, wrapped in his grey cloak and cap of coarse felt, plumed from the falcon's wing.

"And who speaks the word that shall betray me—a king—a fugitive? Yet, not all the means that treachery can compass shall trammel one hair upon this brow without my privity or consent."

"Comest thou like the sharp wind into my dwelling?" inquired Holt, in a voice tremulous with amazement.

"Free as the unconfined air; yet fettered by a lighter bond—a woman's love!" returned the intruder. "Thou hast a daughter."

The Lord of Grislehurst grew pale at these words. Some terrific meaning clung to them. After a short pause the stranger continued :

" Thus speak the legends of Tigernach, and the bards of Ulster, rapt into visions of the future :—' *When a king of Erin shall flee at the voice of a woman, then shall the distaff and spindle conquer whom the sword and buckler shall not subdue.*' That woman is yon heretic queen—a usurper, an intruder on our birthright. Never were the O'Neales conquered but by woman ! I have lingered here when the war-cry hath rung from the shores of my country. Again the shout hath come, and the impatient chiefs wait for my return. But——"

The warrior seemed to writhe during the conflict. His hands were clenched, and every muscle stiffened with agony. Scorn at his own weakness, and dread, horrible undefinable dread, as he felt the omnipotent power mastering his proud spirit. The man who would have laughed at the shaking of a spear, and the loud rush of the battle, quailed before a woman's hate and a woman's love.

" And what is thy request to-night ? " said Holt.

The stranger answered him in a voice of thunder :

" Thy daughter ! "

Tyrone, for it was he, seemed nigh choking with the emotion he sought to suppress.

" Nay," he continued, " it must not be. Oh ! did I love her less, she had been mine ! "

" Thine ? " suddenly retorted her father, somewhat scornfully. " And who gave thee this power over woman's spirit ? Thou hast not even had speech of her, much less the means to win her favour."

An almost supernatural expression seemed to gather on the features of the chieftain. His eye, rolling through the vista of past years, began to pause, appalled as it approached the dark threshold of the future. He appeared lost to the presence of surrounding objects, as he thus exclaimed with a terrific solemnity :

"When the dark-browed Norah nursed me on her lap, and her eye, though dark to outward sense, saw through the dim veil of destiny, it was thus she sung as she guarded my slumbers, and the hated Sassenach was in the hall:

"'Rest thee, baby! light and darkness
Mingling o'er thy path shall play;
Hope shall flee when thou pursuest,
Lost amid life's trackless way.

"'Rest thee, baby! woman's breast
Thou shalt darken o'er with woe;
None thou lookest on or lovest
Joy or hope hereafter know.
Many a maid thy glance shall rue,
Where it smites it shall subdue.'

It was an evil hour, old man, when I looked upon thy daughter."

Holt, though of a stout and resolute temper, was yet daunted by this bold and unlooked-for address. He trembled as he gazed on the mysterious being before him, gifted, as it seemed, with some supernatural endowments. His unaccountable appearance, the nature of his communications, together with his manner and abrupt mode of speech, would have shaken many a firmer heart unprepared for these disclosures.

"What is thy business with me?" he inquired, with some hesitation.

"To warn thee;—to warn thy daughter. She hath seen me. Ay, to-night. And how runs the prophecy? Let her beware. I have looked on her beforetime. Looked on her! ay, until these glowing orbs have become dim, dazzled with excess of brightness. I have looked on her till this stern bosom hath become softer than the bubbling wax to her impression; but I was concealed, and the maiden passed unharmed by the curse. To-night I have saved her life. A resistless

impulse! And she hath looked on me." He smote his brow, groaning aloud in the agony he endured.

It may be supposed this revelation did not allay the apprehensions of the listener. Bewildered and agitated he turned towards the window. The pale moon was glimmering through the quiet leaves, and he saw a dark and muffled figure in the avenue. It was stationary for a while; it then slowly moved towards the adjoining thicket and was lost to his view. Holt turned to address his visitor, but he had disappeared. It was like the passing of a troubled dream, vague and indistinct, but fraught with horrible conceptions. A cloud seemed to gather on his spirit, teeming with some terrible but unknown doom. Its nature even imagination failed to conjecture. His first impulse was to visit his daughter. He found the careful nurse by her bedside. As he entered the room, Agnes raised one finger to her lips in token of silence. The anxious father bent over his child. Her sleep was heavy and her countenance flushed. A tremor passed over her features. A groan succeeded. Suddenly she started up. With a look of anguish he could never forget, she cried:

"Help! O my father!" She clung around his neck. In vain he endeavoured to soothe her. She sobbed aloud, as if her heart were breaking. But she never told that dream, though her haggard looks, when morning rose on her anxious and pallid countenance, showed the disturbance it had created.

Days and weeks passed by. The intrusion of the bold outlaw was nigh forgotten. The father's apprehensions had in some degree subsided, but Constance did not resume her wonted serenity. Her earliest recollections were those of the old nursery rhymes, with which Agnes had not failed to store her memory. But the giant-killers and their champions now failed to interest and excite. Other feelings than those of terror and of wonder were in operation, requiring a fresh class of stimulants for their support—tales of chivalry and of

love, that all-enduring passion, where maidens and their lovers sighed for twice seven years, and all too brief a trial of their truth and constancy! As she listened, her soul seemed to hang on the minstrel's tongue; that erratic troubadour, Gaffer Gee, being a welcome and frequent visitor at Grislehurst.

One night he had tarried late in the little chamber where she was wont to give him audience. She seemed more wishful to protract his stay than heretofore.

"Now for the ballad of Sir Bertine, the famous Lancashire knight, who was killed at St. Alban's, fighting for the glorious red rose of Lancaster."

Nothing loth, he commenced the following ditty:

"The brave Sir Bertine Entwisel
Hath donned his coat of steel,
And left his hall and stately home,
To fight for England's weal.

"To fight for England's weal, I trow,
And good King Harry's right,
His loyal heart was warm and true,
His sword and buckler bright.

"That sword once felt the craven foe,
Its hilt was black with gore,
And many a mother's son did rue
His might at Agincourt.

"And now he stately steps his hall,
'A summons from the King?
My armour bright, my casque and plume,
My sword and buckler bring.

"'Blow, warder, blow. Thy horn is shrill,
My liegemen hither call,
For I must away to the south countrie,
And spears and lances all.'

" ' Oh, go not to the south countrie ! '
His lady weeping said ;
' Oh, go not to the battle-field,
For I dreamed of the waters red ! '

" ' Oh, go not to the south countrie ! '
Cried out his daughter dear ;
' Oh, go not to the bloody fight,
For I dreamed of the waters clear ! '

" Sir Bertine raised his dark visor,
And he kissed his fond lady ;
' I must away to the wars and fight,
For our king in jeopardy ! '

" The lady gat her to the tower,
She clomb the battlement ;
She watched and greet, while through the woods
The glittering falchions went.

" The wind was high, the storm grew loud,
Fierce rose the billowy sea ;
When from Sir Bertine's lordly tower
The bell boomed heavily !

" ' O mother dear, what bodes that speech
From yonder iron tongue ? '
' 'Tis but the rude, rude blast, my love,
That idle bell hath swung.'

" Upon the rattling casement still
The beating rain fell fast ;
When creeping fingers wandering thrice
Across that window passed.

" ' O mother dear, what means that sound
Upon the lattice nigh ? '
' Tis but the cold, cold, arrowy sleet,
That hurtles in the sky.'

" The blast was still—a pause more dread
Ne'er terror felt—when, lo !
An armed foorstep on the stair
Clanked heavily and slow.

" Up flew the latch and tirling-pin,
Wide swung the grated door,
Then came a solemn stately tread
Upon the quaking floor !

" A shudder through the building ran,
A chill and icy blast :
A moan as though in agony
Some viewless spirit passed !

" ' O mother dear, my heart is froze,
My limbs are stark and cold.'
Her mother spake not, for again
That turret bell had tolled.

" Three days passed by. At eventide
There came an aged man,
He bent him low before the dame,
His wrinkled cheek was wan.

" ' Now speak, thou evil messenger,
Thy tidings show to me.'
That aged man, nor look vouchsafed,
Nor ever a word spake he.

" ' What bringest thou ? ' the lady said,
' I charge thee by the rood.'
He drew a signet from his hand,
'Twas speckled o'er with blood.

" ' Thy husband's grave is wide and deep.
In St. Alban's priory
His body lies, but on his soul
CHRIST JESUS have mercy ! ' " *

* In the parish church of St. Chad, Rochdale, is a marble tablet, erected by John Entwisle, Esquire, a descendant of Sir Bertine, on which is the following inscription :—

" To perpetuate a memorial in the church of St. Alban's

Scarcely had the last solemn supplication been uttered, when the latch of the chamber was raised. The door flew open, and the outlaw, in his dark grey cap and cloak, stood before them. Constance was too much alarmed to utter a word. She clung to her companion with the agony of one grasping at the most fragile support for life and safety.

"Nay, maiden, I would not harm thee," said the intruder, in a voice so musical and sad, that it seemed to drop into the listener's ear like a gush of harmony, or a sweet and melancholy chime wakening up the heart's most endeared and hallowed associations. His features were nobly formed. His eye, large and bright, of the purest grey; the lashes, like a cloud, covering and tempering their lustre. A touch of sadness rested on his lips. They seemed to speak of suffering and endurance, as if the soul's deepest agony would not have cast a word across their barriers. Constance for a moment raised her eyes, but they were suddenly withdrawn, overflowing with some powerful emotion. He still gazed, but one proud effort broke the fixed intensity of his glance, and his tongue resumed its office.

"Maiden, I am pursued. The foe are on my track. My retreat is discovered, and unless thou wilt vouchsafe to me a hiding-place I am in their power. The Earl

(perished by time), this marble is here placed to the memory of a gallant and loyal man, Sir Bertrine Entwisel, Knight, Viscount and Baron of Brybeke, in Normandy, and sometime Bailiff of Constantin, in which office he succeeded his father-in-law, Sir John Ashton, whose daughter Lucy first married Sir Richard le Byron, an ancestor of the Lord Byrons, Barons of Rochdale, and, secondly, Sir Bertine Entwisel, who, after performing repeated acts of valour in the service of his sovereigns, Henry V. and VI., more particularly at Agincourt, was killed in the first battle of St. Alban's, and on his tomb was recorded in brass the following inscription :—

"'Here lyth Syr Bertine Entwisel, Knighte, which was born in Lancastershyre, and was Viscount and Baron of Brybeke in Normandy, and Bailiff of Constantin, who died fighting on King Henry VI. party, 28th May, 1455.

'On whose sowl Jesus have mercy!'"

of Tyrone—nay, I scorn the title—'tis the King of Ulster that stands before thee. I would not crouch thus for my own life, were it not for my country. Her stay, her sustenance, is in thy keeping."

Never did wretchedness and misfortune sue in vain to woman's ear. Constance forgot her weakness and timidity. She saw not her own danger. A fellow-being craved help and succour; all other feelings gave place, and she seemed animated with a new impulse. She looked on the minstrel, as if to ascertain his fidelity. It was evident, however, that no apprehension need be entertained, this personage seeming to manifest no slight solicitude for the safety of the unfortunate chief.

"The old lead mine in the Cleuch," whispered he.

"Nay, it must be in the house," replied Constance, with a glance of forethought beyond her years. "The pursuers will not search this loyal house for treason!"

As was the case in most mansions belonging to families of rank and importance, a room was contrived for purposes of special concealment, where persons or property could be stowed in case of danger. A heavy stack of chimneys was enlarged so as to admit of a small apartment, inconvenient enough in other respects, yet well adapted as a temporary hiding-place.

Hither, through secluded passages, the careful Constance conducted her guest, who had so strangely thrown himself, with unhesitating confidence, upon her generosity and protection. The proud representative of a kingly race was rescued by a woman from ignominy and death. Some feeling of this nature probably overpowered him. As he bade her "good night" his voice faltered, and he passed his hand suddenly athwart his brow. Constance, having fulfilled this sacred duty, shrank from any further intercourse, and hastened to her chamber. It was long ere she could sleep; portentous dreams then brooded over her slumbers. The terrible vision was repeated, and she awoke, but not to her wonted cheerfulness.

How strange, how mysterious, the mechanism of the human heart! The feelings glide insensibly into each other, changing their hue and character imperceptibly, as the colours on the evening cloud. Protection awakens kindness, kindness pity, and pity love. Love, the more dangerous, too, the process being unperceived, insidiously disguised under other names, and under the finest sympathies and affections of our nature.

With a step light and noiseless as that of her favourite spaniel who crept behind her, did Constance make an early visit to ascertain the safety of her prisoner. His retreat was unmolested. The pursuit was for the present evaded, and his enemies thrown out in their track. It was needful, however, that he should remain for a few days in his present concealment, prior to the attempt by which he purposed to regain his native country.

Constance loved the moonlight. The broad glare of day is so garish and extravagant. Besides, there is a restlessness and a buz no human being, at least no sensible human being, can endure. Everything is on the stir. Every creature, however paltry and insignificant, whether moth, mote, or atom, seemed busy. Whereas, one serene soft gaze of the moon appears to allay nature's universal disquiet. The calm and mellow placidity of her look, so heavenly and undisturbed lulls the soul, and subdues its operations to her influence.

Constance, we may suppose, accidentally wandered by the end of the building, where, in the huge buttress of chimneys, a narrow crevice admitted light into the chamber occupied by the fugitive. At times, perhaps unconsciously, her eye wandered from the moon to this dreary abode; where it lingered longest is more than we dare tell. She drew nigh to the dark margin of the pond. The white swans were sleeping in the sedge. At her approach they fluttered clumsily to their element; there, the symbols of elegance and grace, like wreaths

of sea-foam on its surface, they glided on, apparently without an impulse or an effort. She was gazing on them when a rustle amongst the willows on her left arrested her attention. Soon the mysterious and almost omnipresent form of Tyrone stood before her.

"I must away, maiden—Constance!" His voice was mournful as the last faint sound of the evening bell upon the waters.

"Why art thou here?" She said this in a tone of mingled anxiety and surprise.

"Here? Too long have I lingered in these woods and around thy dwelling, Constance. But I must begone—for ever!"

"For ever?" cried the perplexed girl, forgetful of all but the dread thought of that "for ever!"

"Aye, for ever? Why should I stay?"

This question, alas! she could not answer, but stood gazing on the dark water, and on the silver waves which the bright swans had rippled over the pool. Though she saw them not, yet the scene mingled itself insensibly with the feelings then swelling in her bosom; and these recurrent circumstances, in subsequent periods of her existence, never failed to bring the same dark tide of thought over the soul with vivid and agonizing distinctness.

"Maiden, beware!"

Constance turned towards him: the moonlight fell on his brow: the dark curls swept nobly out from their broad shadows, twining luxuriantly about his cheek. His eyes were fixed on her with an eagerness and an anguish in their expression the most absorbing and intense.

"I have loved thee. Aye, if it be love to live whole nights on the memory of a glance—on a smile—on the indelible impress of thy form. Here—here! But no living thing that I have loved; no being that e'er looked on me with kindliness and favour, that has not been marked out for destruction. Oh, that those

eyes had ne'er looked upon me! Thou wert happy, and I have lingered on thy footstep till I have dragged thee to the same gulph where all hope—all joy that e'er stole in upon my dark path, must perish."

"Oh! do not foretaste thy misery thus," cried Constance. "The cruel sufferings thou hast undergone make thee apprehensive of evil. But how can *thy* fate control my destiny?"

"How I know not," said Tyrone, "save that it shall bring the same clouds in unmitigated darkness about thy path. Dost thou love me? Nay, start not. Stay not!" cried he, making way for the maiden to pass. But Constance seemed unable to move—terrified and speechless.

"Perchance thou knowest it not, but thou wouldest love me as a woman loves;—aye, beyond even the verge and extremity of hope! Even now the poison rankles in thy bosom. Hark! 'tis the doom yon glorious intelligences denounced from that glittering vault when they proclaimed my birth!"

He repeated the prediction as aforetime, with a deep, solemn intonation:—the maiden's blood seemed to curdle with horror. A pause of bewildering and mysterious terror followed. One brief minute in the lapse of time—but an age in the records of thought! Constance, fearful of looking on the dark billows of the spirit, sought to avert her glance.

"Thou art an exile, and misfortune prompted me to thy succour; thou hast won my pity, stranger."

"Beshrew me, 'tis a wary and subtle deceiver, this same casuist love. Believe him not!" said he, in a burst and agony of soul that made Constance tremble. "He would lead thee veiled to the very brink of the precipice, then snatch the shelter from thine eyes and bid thee leap! Nay, 'tis not pride—'tis the doom, the curse of my birthright that is upon me. Maiden! I will but strike to thine heart, and then—poor soul!" He shuddered; his voice grew tremulous and con-

vulsed. "The stricken one shall fall. Hark! the hounds are again upon my track!" The well-practised ear of the hunted fugitive could discern the approach of footsteps long before they were audible to an ordinary listener: his eye and ear seemed on the stretch;—his head bent forward in the same direction;—he breathed not. Even Constance seemed to suspend the current of her own thoughts at this interruption.

"They are approaching. In all likelihood 'tis a posse from the sheriff." Again he listened. "They are armed. Nay, then, Tyrone, thou must to cover: thou canst not flee. Point not to the hiding-place I have left. If, as I suspect, they bring a warrant of search, thy father's life may be in jeopardy."

"Where, oh, where?" said Constance, forgetful of all consequences, in her anxiety for her father's fate and that of the illustrious stranger.

"In thy chamber, lady."

She drew back in dismay.

"Nay," continued he, guessing at the cause of her alarm. "They will not care to scrutinize for me there with much exactness; and, by the faith of my fathers, I will not wrong thee!"

There was a frankness, an open and undisguised freedom of manner, in this address, which assured her. Her confidence returned, and she committed herself promptly to the issue. She felt her soul expand with the desire of contributing to his ultimate escape. All the ardour of her nature was concentrated in this generous and self-devoted feeling. Too innocent for suspicion, she seemed to rise above its influence.

Silently, and with due caution, she led the unfortunate Earl to her own chamber, where, in a recess opening through the bed's head into the arras, he seemed secure from discovery.

Scarcely was this arrangement completed ere a thundering knock announced the visitor. It was an officer of justice, attended by some half-dozen followers, who

watched every avenue to the house whilst his message was delivered within.

This official delivered into the hands of Holt a warrant for the apprehension of O'Neale, Earl of Tyrone, a traitor, then suspected of being harboured in the mansion of Grislehurst, whom the occupier was commanded, on pain of being treated as an accomplice, to deliver into the hands of justice, for the due administering of those pains and penalties which were attached to his crime.

The loyal owner, fired with indignation at this foul charge, rebutted the accusation with contempt.

" However loth," said the messenger, " I must execute mine office ; and, seeing this first mission hath failed in its purpose, I have here a warrant of search. Mine orders are imperative."

" I tell thee I have no plotters lurking here. Search and welcome ;—but if thou findest aught in this house that smells of treason, the Queen may blot out my escutcheon. I'll dismount the *pheon.* The arrow-head shall return to its quiver. 'Twas honestly won, and, by our lady's grace, it shall be honestly worn ! "

" We must obey," said the officer ; " it shall be done with all courtesy and despatch."

Holt bit his lips with rage and vexation. From the suspicion of harbouring and aiding the traitor Tyrone, his known loyalty and good faith should have protected him. He hoped, however, to throw back on the author of this foul slander the disgrace attached to it. Smothering his wrath, and brooding over its gratification, he accompanied the messenger, who, placing an additional guard at the main entrance, proceeded with a wary eye to the search. He carefully scrutinized the shape of the rooms, striking the walls and wainscots, measuring the capacity of the chambers, that no space might be left unaccounted for either in one way or another. The concealed apartment in the chimney-range did not escape his examination. Closets, cupboards, folding-

doors—even the family pictures were turned aside, lest some stratagem should lurk behind.

Holt, with a look of malicious satisfaction, beheld every fresh disappointment, which he followed with undisguised expressions of ill-will.

"Now for the women's apartments," said the officer.

"I have but one daughter. Dost fancy that treason may be stitched in her petticoat? Thinkest thou she would hide this invisible gallant in her bedchamber? 'Sdeath, that it should ha' come to this! But I'll have my revenge."

"I would fain spare thee from this contumely, but——"

"But what?"

"I must search the house through; and though I doubt not now that our information is false, yet I may not disobey the mandate I have received."

"Is this thy courtesy?"

"My courtesy must yet consist with the true and honest discharge of mine office. I wait not further parley."

A short gallery communicated from the stairhead to the private chamber of Constance. They met her outside the door; and the timid girl grew pale as she beheld the officer led on by her father.

"Constance," cried he, "thy chamber smacks of treason: it must be purged from this suspicion. This mousing owl will search the crannies even of a woman's wits ere he sate his appetite for discovery. Hast aught plotting in the hem of thy purfle, or in thy holiday ruff and fardingale? Come with us, wench;—the gallant Earl of Tyrone would sport himself bravely in thy bedchamber, pretty innocent!"

"If my gallantry were akin to mine office, then, lady, would I spare thy bosom and mine own nature this extremity. Believe me, thou shalt suffer no rudeness at my hands."

The officer bowed low, observing her confusion and distress.

" Go with us," said her father, " and leave not until our search is over. Mayhap he may find a lover in thy shoe, or in the wrinkles of thy rose-tie." He entered the chamber as he said this. It was a little room, tricked out with great elegance and beauty. Indian cabinets were there, and other costly ornaments, inlaid with ivory and pearl, in the arrangement of which, and of the other furniture, considerable taste was displayed. A lute lay in one corner ; tambour-work and embroidery occupied a recess near the window ; the clothes-presses showed their contents neatly folded, and carefully set out to the best advantage.

" I'faith, wench, thy chamber seems well fitted for so goodly a brace of guests—not a thread awry. Everything in trim order for thy gallants, mayhap. Thou hast not been at thy studies of late. I have seen its interior in somewhat less orderly fashion. I marvel if it might not be pranked out for our coming. Now, to work, sir : where does thy grubbing begin ? "

Constance posted herself in a gloomy corner, where she could watch their proceedings almost unperceived. She hoped that in her chamber the search would not be so strict as in situations of more likelihood and probability for concealment. At any rate, the common feelings of delicacy and respect—not quite extinct, she observed, even in this purveyor of justice—would prevent any very exact or dangerous scrutiny. Nor was she deceived. He merely felt round the walls, opened the presses and closets, but did not disturb the bed furniture. He was retiring from the search, when her father scornfully taunted him with the ill-success of his mission.

" I wonder thou hast not tumbled the bed topsy-turvy. I am glad to see thou hast yet some grace and manners in thy vocation. Now, Sir Messenger, to requite thee for this thy courtesy and forbearance, I

will show thee a secret tabernacle, which all thy prying has not been able to discover."

Saying this he approached the bed: a spring was concealed in one of the posts communicating with the secret door behind which Tyrone was hidden. As he turned aside the drapery to ascertain precisely its situation, Constance, no longer able to control her apprehension of discovery, rushed before him. Her terror, for the time, threw her completely from her guard.

"Do not, my father: he must not look there. For my sake, oh, spare *this*——"

She was silent: her lips grew deadly pale; and she leaned against the pillar for support. The officer's suspicions were awakened, and he gave a shrewd guess at the truth.

"Now, fair dame," he cried, "it is but an ungracious office to thwart a lady of her will, but I must see what lurks in that same secret recess. Master Holt, I prythee help me to a peep behind the curtain."

But Holt was too much astonished to comply. What could exist there to excite his daughter's apprehensions so powerfully puzzled him greatly. He had not a thought, the most remote, that could affect her fidelity —yet he hesitated. The officer, in a more peremptory tone, demanded admission. Rousing from his stupor, and mortified at the folly of these girlish fancies, he struck the spring: in a trice, a portion of the bed's head flew open, displaying a dark chasm beyond. Swift as thought the officer darted through the aperture; but the door was immediately shut, and with great violence. A scuffle was heard within, but not a word was spoken. Holt, in doubt and consternation, gazed with a wild and terrific aspect on the devoted Constance, who, covering her face, sought to avoid seeing the expected result of her imprudence. Her father now listened. There was a dread suspense in his look more fearful than even the most violent outburst of his wrath. He seemed every moment to expect some irre-

fragable proof—some visible and overwhelming conviction of his daughter's infamy. The door was still closed. Groans were plainly audible, telling of some terrible strife within. Suddenly these indications ceased. Holt shuddered. He fancied some foul act was perpetrating—perhaps even now consummated—under his own roof; and swift would be the vengeance required at his hands. Constance, too, seemed to apprehend the commission of some deadly crime, as she threw herself imploringly before her father.

"Save them—oh, save them!—their strife is mortal!"

He shook her from him with a glance of abhorrence, and the maiden fell heavily on the floor. He was preparing to enter when the door flew open, and a form rushed through in the gaudy apparel of the officer. He leaped on the floor, and, ere Holt could utter a word, he heard him descending the stairs with great precipitation.

"Whom hast thou concealed in thy bedchamber?" inquired the almost frantic father. Constance sat on the ground, her head resting on the chair beside which she had fallen. She wept not, but her heart was full even to bursting.

"What is the name of thy paramour?—Thou hast been somewhat eager, methinks, to accomplish thine own and a father's disgrace?"

This cutting address roused her. She replied, but in a firm tone:

"A stranger—an exile. Misfortune appeals not to woman's heart unalleviated. He threw himself on my protection; and where the feelings own no taint, their purity is not sullied—even in a lady's bedchamber!"

A glance of insulted pride passed over her beautifully-formed features. It was but for a moment. The agony of her spirit soon drank up the slender rill her feelings had gushed forth, and she stood withered and drooping before the angry frown of her father.

"Surely, 'tis not the rebel Tyrone that my daughter

harbours in the privacy of her chamber? Speak!—Nay, then hast thou indeed brought an old man's grey hairs to the grave in sorrow! Treason!—Oh, that I have lived for this—and my own flesh and blood hath done it. Out of my sight, unnatural monster. Dare not to crawl again across my path, lest I kill thee!"

"Oh my father! I am indeed innocent." She again threw herself at his feet, but he spurned her from him as though he loathed her beyond endurance. Boiling and maddened with rage at the presumption of this daring rebel, Holt, forgetful of his own danger, seized the light. He burst open the secret door; but what was his astonishment on beholding, not the hated form of Tyrone, but the officer of justice himself, gagged, pinioned, and deprived of his outer dress. The cap and mantle of Tyrone, by his side, told too plainly of the daring and dangerous exploit by which his escape had been effected.

The outlaw, soon after his enlargement, finding that the cause he had espoused was hopeless, and that matters were at the last extremity in his own fate, and that of his unhappy country—fearful, too, of drawing the innocent Constance and her father into the deep vortex of his own ruin—made all haste to the capital where, through the powerful interest excited in his behalf, aided by his well-known valour and the influence he was known to possess amongst his countrymen, he received a free pardon from the Queen.

Yet his thoughts lingered on the remembrance of her to whose heroic and confiding spirit he owed his safety. Never had his proud bosom been so enthralled. Though nurtured in camps, amid the din of arms, and the shout of the battle, yet his knowledge of the female heart was almost intuitive. He had loved more than once, but in every case the attachment ended unhappily, terminating either by the death of the object or by some calamity his own evil fate had unavoidably brought upon its victim. Though fearful the same operation of his

destiny would ensue, and that misery and misfortune would still follow the current of his affections, yet he resolved to behold once more the maiden he loved with an ardour almost surpassing his own belief.

One cold dull morning, towards the wane of the year, when the heavy drops lay long on the rank herbage; no sunbeam yet loitering through the damp chill atmosphere, but the sky one wide and unvarying expanse—a sea of cloud—here and there a black scud passing over, like a dim bark sweeping across the bosom of that "waveless deep," a stranger stood by a low wicket near the mansion of Grislehurst. He looked wistfully at the gloomy windows, unlighted by a single reflection from without, like the rayless night of his own soul;—they were mostly closed. A mysterious and unusual stillness prevailed. The brown leaves fluttered about, unswept from the dreary avenues. Decayed branches obstructed the paths; and every object wore a look of wretchedness and dilapidation. The only sign of occupancy and life was one grey wreath of smoke, curling heavily from its vent, as if oppressed with the gloom by which it was surrounded. The melancholy note of the redbreast was the only living sound, as the bird came hopping towards him with its usual air of familiarity and respect. Enveloped in a military cloak, and in his cap a dark feather drooping gently over his proud features, the stranger slowly approached the house: a side-door stood partly open. He entered. A narrow passage led into the hall. No embers brightened the huge chimney. The table showed no relics of the feast—no tokens of the past night's revel. The deer's antlers still hung over the master's place at the board, but the oaken chair was gone. Dust and desertion had played strange antics in these "high places." The busy spider had wreathed her dingy festoons in mockery over the pomp she degraded.

He listened, but there was no sound, save the last faint echo of his footstep. Turning towards the staircase,

a beautiful spaniel, a sort of privileged favourite of Constance, came, with a deep growl, as if to warn away the intruder. But the sagacious animal suddenly fawned upon him, and with a low whine ascended the stairs, looking back wistfully, as though inviting him to follow.

Scarcely knowing why, or bestowing one thought on the nature of his intrusion, he ascended. The place seemed familiar to him. He entered a narrow gallery, where he paused, overcome by some sudden and overwhelming emotion. The dog stood, too, looking back with a low and sorrowful whine. With a sudden effort he grappled with and shook off the dark spirit that threatened to overpower him. A low murmur was heard apparently from a chamber at no great distance. Without reflecting a moment on the impropriety of his situation, he hastily approached the door. His guide, with a look of almost irresistible persuasion, imploring him to enter.

It was the chamber of Constance. A female was kneeling by the bed, too much absorbed to be conscious of his approach: she was in the attitude of prayer. He recognized the old nurse—her eye glistening in the fervour of devotion, whilst pouring forth, to her FATHER in secret, the agony of soul that words are too feeble to express.

Bending over the bed, as if for the support of some frail victim of disease, he beheld the lord of the mansion. His look was wild and haggard—no moisture floated over his eyeballs: they were glazed and motionless; arid as the hot desert—no refreshing rain dropped from their burning orbs, dimmed with the shadows of despair.

Stretched on the bed, her pale cheek resting on the bosom of her father, lay the yet beauteous form of Constance Holt. A hectic flush at times passed across her features. Her lip, shrunk and parched with the fever that consumed her, was moistened by an attendant with unremitting and unwearied assiduity; her eye

often rose in tenderness on her parent, as if anxious to impart to him the consolation she enjoyed.

"Oh, I am happy, my father!" Here a sudden change was visible—some chord of sorrow was touched, and it vibrated to her soul.

Her father spoke not.

"I *have* loved!—Oh, faithfully. But, now—let me die without a murmur to Thee, or one wish but Thy will, and I am happy!" She raised her soft and streaming eyes towards the throne of that Mercy she addressed. The cloud passed, but she sank back on her pillow, exhausted with the conflict. Her father bent over her in silent terror, anticipating the last struggle. Suddenly he exclaimed, as if to call back the yet lingering spirit:

"Live, my Constance! Could I save thee, thou blighted bud—blighted by my——" His lip grew pale; he struck his forehead, and a groan like the last expiring throe of nature escaped him.

"Would that the destroyer of my peace were here!—'Tis too late—or I would not now forbid thy love. But he was a traitor, a rebel—else——"

Constance gradually revived from her insensibility. A sudden flash from the departing spirit seemed to have animated her—a new and vehement energy, which strangely contrasted with her weak and debilitated frame.

"I have seen him," she cried. "Oh, methought his form passed before me;—but it is gone!" She looked eagerly round the apartment; other eyes involuntarily followed—but no living object could be distinguished through the chill and oppressive gloom that brooded over that chamber of death.

"It was a vision—a shadowy messenger from the tomb. Yet, once more if I might see him—ere I die." A deep sob, succeeded by a rapid gush of tears, relieved her; but it told of the powerful and all-pervading passion not yet extinguished in her breast.

"We shall meet!" again she raised her eyes towards that throne to which the sigh of the sufferer never ascended in vain.

"Yes, my own—my loved Constance, now!" cried the stranger, rushing from his concealment. He clasped her in his arms. A gleam, like sunlight across the wave, shot athwart the shadow that was gathering on her eye. It seemed the forerunner of a change. The anxious father forebore to speak, but he looked on his daughter with an agony that seemed to threaten either reason or existence. Constance gazed on her lover, but her eye gradually became more dim. Her hand relaxed in his grasp, yet her features wore a look of serenity and happiness.

"O most merciful Father! Thou hast heard my prayer, through Him whose merits have found me a place in that glory to which I come. Be merciful to him whose love is true as mine own, and faithful unto death. Tyrone, we meet again!—Oh, how have I prayed for thee!" Her eyes seemed to brighten even in this world with the glories of another.

"Farewell!—I hear the hymns of yon ransomed ones around the throne. They beckon my spirit from these dark places of sorrow. Now—farewell!"

She cast one look towards her lover: it was the last glimpse of earth. The next moment her gaze was on the brightness of that world whence sorrow and sighing flee away. So sudden was the transition, that the first smile of the disembodied spirit seemed to linger on the abode she had left, like the evening cloud, reflecting the glories of another sky, ere it fades for ever into the darkness and solitude of night.

HOGHTON TOWER

" Pastime with good company
I love, and shall until I die ;
Grudge so will, but none deny ;
So God be pleased, so live will I.
For my pastance,
Hunt, sing, and dance,
My heart is set ;
All godly sport,
To my comfort,
Who shall me let ? "

The Kinges Balade.

" God gives not kings the style of gods in vain,
For on his throne his sceptre do they sway ;
And, as their subjects ought them to obey,
So kings should feare and serve their God againe."

King James to his Son Prince Henry.

" The ancient castle denominated Hoghton Tower stands on the summit of a hill, formerly shrouded with trees, four miles and a half west of Blackburn. It was erected by Sir Thomas Hoghton, in the beginning of Elizabeth's reign. It remained for several generations the principal seat of the Hoghton family ; and after part of it had been blown up by accident, when garrisoned for Charles the First, the injury was repaired. The family have now removed to Walton Hall ; and Hoghton Tower is left to decay, two poor families inhabiting the south wing only. A ponderous gateway, immediately under the centre tower, leads to the quadrangular courtyard, capable of holding six hundred men. The noble embattled tower, forming the west front, with its two minor square towers, serve as appendages to the north and south wing, and are united by low walls. Within the courtyard, a noble flight of steps leads to the middle quadripartite, similar in aspect to Stonyhurst College, the ancient residence of the

Sherbournes. This middle pile contains large staircases branching out to long galleries, into which the several chambers open. One chamber, still called James the First's room, is considered 'most worthy of notice'; it has two square windows in both north and south, is beautifully wainscoted, and contains some old furniture. A fine prospect is gained from its ancient and sequestered abode; the pretty village of Walton-le-dale, delightfully situate in a valley, the improving town of Preston, and the single-coned Nase Point presenting itself majestically in the distance. The gentle river Darwen pursues its placid course among the enclosures at the base of the hill."

The above description, extracted from Nichols's *Royal Progresses of James the First*, and likewise the particulars scattered through the following tale, will, we hope, convey to the reader a pretty accurate idea of this noble but deserted mansion.

A petition, which was presented here (some say at Myerscough) to King James, by a great number of Lancashire peasants, tradesmen, and servants, requesting that they might be allowed to take their diversions (as of old accustomed) after divine service on Sundays, is said to have been the origin of the *Book of Sports*, soon after promulgated by royal authority. James being persuaded those were Puritans who forbade such diversions, and that they were Jewishly inclined, because they affected to call Sunday the Sabbath, recommended that diverting exercises should be used after evening prayer, and ordered the book to be read publicly in all churches; and such ministers as refused to obey the injunction were threatened with severe punishment in the High Commission Court. This legal violation of the day which is unequivocally the Christian Sabbath, roused at the time the indignation of the seriously disposed, and has been frequently reprobated by historians. Foremost of its opposers, and eminent in example, stands the virtuous and firm Archbishop Abbot, who, being at Croydon the day it was ordered to be read in churches, flatly forbade it to be read there; which the King was pleased to wink at, notwithstanding the daily endeavours that were used to irritate the King against him. The *Book of Sports* is not, however, without its

apologists among modern writers. The following are Mr. D'Israeli's remarks on the subject :—" The King found the people in Lancashire discontented, from the unusual deprivation of their popular recreations on Sundays and holidays after the church service : ' With our own ears we heard the general complaint of our people.' The Catholic priests were busy insinuating among the lower orders that the Reformed religion was a sullen deprivation of all mirth and social amusements, and thus ' turning the people's hearts.' But while they were denied what the King terms ' lawful recreations ' (which are enumerated to consist of dancing, archery, leaping, vaulting, May-games, Whitsun-ales, morris-dances, and the setting up of May-poles, and other manly sports), they had substituted some vicious ones. Alehouses were more frequented, drunkenness more general, tale-mongery and sedition, the vices of sedentary idleness, prevailed, while a fanatical gloom was spreading over the country. The King whose gaiety of temper instantly sympathised with the multitude, being perhaps alarmed at this new shape which Puritanism was assuming, published the *Book of Sports*, which soon obtained the contemptuous name of ' The Dancing Book ' " (*Life of James*, p. 135). In reply to this view of the subject we shall, for the present, conclude with Dr. Whitaker's remark, that " The King was little aware of the effects which the ill-judged licence was likely to produce on the common people. The relics of it are hardly worn out to this day ; and there is scarcely a Sunday evening in any village of the county of Lancaster which does not exhibit symptoms of obedience to the injunction of honest ' recreation.' "—*Royal Progress of James I.*

On the 15th of August, in the year 1617, a day memorable for its heat and brightness, and for the more enduring glory shed over this remote corner of our rejoicing and gladdened realm, came forth King James, from the southern gate of his loyal borough of Preston, in a gilded and unwieldy caroche, something abated of its lustre by reason of long service and the many vicissitudes attending his Majesty's " progresses," which he under-

went to the great comfort and well-being of his dominions.

It were needless to set forth the mighty state in which this war-hating monarch, this " vicegerent of Divinity," departed—or the great error and agitation of Mr. Breares, the lawyer, when he made a marvellous proper speech at the town-cross—wiping his forehead thrice, and his mouth barely once. Nor shall we dilate upon the distress, and dazzling silk doublets of the mayor and aldermen of this proud and thrice-happy borough—nor how they knelt to the soft salute of his Majesty's hand. Our whole book were a space too brief, and a region too inglorious, for the wide pomp and paraphernalia of the time ; and how the bailiff rode, and the mace-bearer guarded the caroche, it were presumption, an offensive compound of ignorance and pride, to attempt the portraiture. Suffice it to say, they wore mulberry-coloured taffeta gowns, carried white staves and foot-cloths, and were preceded by twenty-four stout yeomen riding before the king, with fringed javelins, unto a place beyond Walton, where they departed. Our object is to notice matters of less magnitude and splendour ; occurrences then too trivial to guide the pen of the chronicler, lost beneath the blaze and effulgence that followed on the track of this pageant-loving king. Scraps, which the pomps and vanities of those days would have degraded, we thus snatch from oblivion ; a preservation more worthy, and an occupation more useful, we hope, than to hand down to admiring ages the colour and cut of taffeta or brocade.

This " wisest " of earthly kings was an ill-spoiled compound of qualities, the types of which existed in his monitor and his preceptor ; two great men, whom history has not failed to distinguish—Archie Armstrong and George Buchanan—the wit and the scholar, which in him became the representatives of two much more useful and esteemed qualities—fool and pedant !

Attended by his favourite Buckingham and a numer-

ous train of officials, he " progressed " upon the road to Hoghton Tower, the spacious and splendid dwelling of Sir Richard Hoghton, the first baronet of that family, whose guest he was to continue for a space, to the great envy and admiration of the whole neighbourhood.

As they came nigh the Tower, nothing could be conceived more beautiful or picturesque. Its embattled gateway, bartizans, and battlements, crowning the summit of a bold and commanding eminence, became brightly illuminated, flashing against grim and shapeless masses of cloud, the shattered relics of a storm, that was rolling away in the distance.

Many of the neighbouring gentry were in attendance, not disdaining to wear, out of grace and courtesy to Sir Richard Hoghton, the livery of their thrice-honoured entertainer.

The king's train alone were very numerous, amongst whom appeared Lord Zouch, Constable of Dover Castle, and Sir George Goring, Lieutenant of the Gentlemen Pensioners.* With the latter rode Sir John Finett,†

* " Sir George Goring, of Hurst Pierrepoint, in Sussex, representative of a junior line of the respectable family of Goring, which maintains its importance in that county, was bred at court, under the care of his father, one of Elizabeth's Gentlemen Pensioners ; was knighted May 29, 1608 ; in 1610, occurs as Gentleman in Ordinary of the Bedchamber to Prince Henry ; and now accompanied the king to Scotland as Lieutenant of his Gentlemen Pensioners. He was recommended to James equally by his sagacity and a peculiar jocularity of humour, and became the king's familiar companion."—Nichols's *Royal Progresses*, vol. iii. p. 256.

† Sir John Finett, says Anthony à Wood (Fasti by Bliss, vol. i. col. 492), was son of Sir Robert Finett, of Soulton, near Dover, in Kent, son and heir of Sir Thomas, son and heir of John Finett, of Sienna, in Italy (where his name is ancient), who came into England in quality of servant to Cardinal Campegius, and married a maid of honour to Queen Katharine. " Sir John was always bred in the Court, where, by his wit, innocent mirth, and great skill in composing songs, he pleased James the First very much. He was sent into France in 1614, about matters of public concern, and in the year after received the honour of knighthood at Whitehall ; about which time (or

Assistant Master of the Ceremonies, but who acted the chief part in this important office during the king's journey ; two worthies, of whom it might be said, that for tempering of the king's humour, and aptness in ministering to his delights, their like could scarcely have been found. Such nights of feasting and dancing, such days of hawking, hunting, and horse-racing, had never before gladdened the heart of " Merry Englonde," or England's monarchs. It seemed as if the whole realm were given up to idolatry and dissipation. The idol pleasure was worshipped with such ardour and devotion, that all ranks were striving to outdo each other in tinsel, trumpery, and deeds of worthlessness and folly.

The king loved such disguises and representations as were witty and sudden ; the more ridiculous, and to him the more pleasant. This vain and frivolous humour might seem unworthy and unbecoming in so great a prince, whose profundity of wisdom had well entitled him to the appellation of " our English Solomon," did we not call to remembrance that the greatest of men have not disdained to be children in their sports ; the deepest dispositions of the mind seeming to require the lightest and most frivolous recreations.

These worthy purveyors to the king's pleasure were of a temper and capacity widely different. Sir George Goring was caustic and severe ; Sir John Finett pleasant and social, delighting in nothing so much as in the happiness and gratification of his friends. But the natural disposition of his thoughts was wild and melancholic, taking its hue from some early impression, that was now fading in doubt and disappointment.

The full burst of his hilarity floated joyously on the surface, and his loud mirth, blunting the keen edge of his own feelings, became the more exhilarating in proportion to their acuteness. He had the warm blood of

rather about 1612) he was made assistant to the master of the ceremonies, with the reversion of that place."—Nichols's *Progresses*, vol. iii. p. 133.

the Italian in his veins, being descended from an ancient family of Sienna ; and his rich brown cheek and darkly-speaking eye belied not the land of his origin. Goring was fat and swarthy : his nose small and supercilious, and his eye grey and piercing. He cared not whom he wounded, provided the shafts he drew were well pointed ; and his wit quick and well-aimed, causing the king to laugh, and his victim to writhe during their operation.

As the monarch sate discoursing with the Duke of Buckingham, being sore heated, he threw open the windows of his coach, from whence he occasionally obtruded his wise head for a survey, and a visit from some vagrant and silly breeze, if any were abroad. The roads admitted not of aught but the gentlest paces, and the great clamour and cloud about the procession made the dust and heat excessively annoying ; whereupon the king, it is said, did apply a very uncourteous epithet to some of his loving subjects, who came too close upon his person, which, though not generally averse to being gazed at, was in too warm an atmosphere at present for enjoying these kingly exhibitions.

" O' my saul, that meikle stane would build a bra' chappin-block for my Lord Provost," said royalty, its head again stationed at the window, surveying with solemn curiosity an egg-shaped stone of the boulder sort, which, sure enough, was of a remarkable bigness, though not of that rarity or infrequence that should have drawn forth the wonder of a king. His native dialect he generally employed on jocose and familiar subjects. In affairs of importance he affected the use of the English tongue, which he spoke with great formality and pomp.

" Stop," said he. " There be *literæ* or letters thereon. Unto what purport ? "

But no one could resolve him as to the use of the stone, or the purport of the writing. His worthy host protested that the wonder had never before been

HOGHTON TOWER.

observed. It was doubtless some miracle worked for the occasion.

"But the *scriptum* or writing will set forth the motive or argument thereto. The letters be goodly and well-shapen."

Many voices recited the inscription, forming the following ill-spelled line:

"Torne me o're, an I'le tel thee plaine."

The well-known childish curiosity of the monarch would not permit him to go away unsatisfied. The day was hot, and the stone was heavy; but a long and laborious toil brought to light the following satisfactory intelligence:

"Hot porritch softens hard butter-cakes,
*So torne me o'er again."**

"And o' my saul," said the king, "ye shall gang roun' to yere place again; for sa meikle as these country gowks mauna ken the riddle without the labour."

So the "muckle stane" was replaced for the next comer who had strength and curiosity enough to unriddle the sphinx.

But James did not relish fooleries wherein he was the butt. Whether it was devised by some wicked rhymester and contemner of royalty in the neighbourhood, or placed there by some of the wits of his own company, was never ascertained, though he challenged them at random, and swore lustily that he would know the originator of this piece of folly and impertinence.

* This stone, the author has been told, was in existence less than a century ago, though not in the precise situation above alluded to. He has heard the disappointment of the curious passers-by told with considerable humour; they, however, generally took care to replace the stone with its word of promise before the eye, that the next comer might bestow the same labour for the like result.

As the king drew nigh to the avenue, there presently issued forth a goodly flourish of trumpets, which made the women caper and the horses prance. Sir Richard Hoghton rode with the king ; but his son Sir Gilbert met his Majesty with a great retinue, clad mostly after the same fashion ; many of the neighbouring gentry, as we have before observed, not disdaining to put on Sir Richard's gowns and liveries, to swell the pomp and magnificence of that memorable occasion.

The javelin-bearers rode two and two : halting at his Majesty's approach, they formed an avenue, through which Sir Gilbert, sumptuously attired, went forth to salute the king. His cloak and hose were all glistening and spangled with embroidery ; his vest was cloth of gold, enriched with rare and costly stones ; his shirt-bands and ruffles were worked in silver ; and his gloves, Spanish, breathing out the choicest perfume ; his hat was of Frenchy murrey, the brims thick set with gold twist and spangles ; round it was a band of goldsmith's work, looped with a crystal button.

On approaching the monarch he gracefully alighted ; whereupon James commanded that the carriage should be stayed, thrusting out his hand in a very gracious sort to this worthy knight, who, on his knees, received the blessing.

His Majesty then took horse, assisted by Buckingham, who held the stirrup. But the king's peculiar and unsteady vaulting was much noticed. Many of the bystanders, not aware of his Majesty's dislike to these equestrian feats, marvelled not a little at the motion of his leg, and the disturbed and uneasy position he assumed. The pathway up the avenue was laid with purple velvet, on which the glittering cavalcade, horse and foot, formed a noble pageant, whose pomp was almost dazzling to behold. The carriage took another path opened for the occasion. The whole area in front of the Tower teemed with multitudes, whose shouts and huzzas made the very hills and echoes loyal

while they rang with acclamations to their sovereign. Presently issued forth from the middle gateway two curiously-attired figures, bearing emblems to indicate their character and design. There were living allegories, represented by the house-steward and Hobbe Handycap, the forester or tienman, keeper of vert and venison, a "ryghte merrie knave," and one foremost in all pastimes and "honest recreations"; a great promoter and performer of May-games, morris-dancing, and the like. These figures were to be conceived as household gods, the tutelary deities of Hoghton. The first spokesman was clad in a purple taffeta mantle; in one hand was a palm-tree branch, on his head a garland of the like sort, and in the other hand he carried a dog.

King James, accustomed to, and expecting these mummeries, made a full stop, when, forthwith, began the purple mantle as follows:

> "This day, great Kinge, for government admired,
> Which these thy subjects have so much desired,
> Shall be kept holy in their heart's best treasure,
> And vowed to James, as is this month to Cæsar";

with a good score of lines besides, of the like brevity and metre. In them he was said to be greater even than the immortal gods themselves, seeing that they came to render their homage unto him, together with all things else over which they bare rule, even as the greater doth include the less.

Then spake Hobbe, the deity of the chase:

"Greatest of mortals!"

But he was presently nonplussed, and the steward stepped forth to his relief, reciting how that the glorious beams from his Majesty's person had stricken dumb this weaker divinity. Having finished, the heat being intense, and they mightily encumbered with garments, did presently turn their backs on the king's majesty, making all speed towards the gateway for shelter. This breach of good manners was not unnoticed by

the monarch, who said, wittily, we suppose, for it was much applauded, that these gods were not of High Olympus, but of the nether sort, inasmuch as they had turned tail upon their subject.

James and his company, passing through the ponderous and embattled gateway, entered into the great quadrangle, an area, it is reported, of sufficient size to contain six hundred men. Here he alighted, and was conducted in great state to the oaken chamber, where, royalty being very hot, a tankard of Rhenish wine, mingled with rosewater, was handed to him ; of this he partook but sparingly, calling to Buckingham for a cup of muscadine and eggs.

Goring and Finett were not idle, but each of them fully employed in their respective vocations. Sir John had been pierced by a pair of dark eyes from the crowd upon the staircase, and Goring was making all haste for the royal hunt, his Majesty having signified that he would on that same evening kill a stag. James was, generally, as quick to resolve as he was impotent to execute ; vacillating, and without any fixed purpose, in matters that required decision and promptitude of action.

With his usual pusillanimity the king went through the business of the hunt, the deer being literally driven into the very teeth of the dogs. An hour having been thus occupied, he commanded that they should return, highly satisfied with his own skill and intrepidity. Ascending the hill with his favourite, Goring, and discoursing pleasantly on this noble pastime, the king turned round on the sudden, as though recollecting something he had lost.

" What ! Jack Finett. Quhere ? quhere, I say, is my Sienna balsam ? " said he, laying a deep emphasis on the guttural. This sally was acknowledged with delight by the courtiers. But " Jack " had not been seen or even remembered. Some trick or device was doubtless intended, and the king held himself in readiness

for the expected surprise : but none was forthcoming. No magazine of mirth exploded ; no mine was sprung ; and James entered into his chamber without any visible expression of jocoseness issuing from the fertile brains of Sir John Finett. The irritation produced by his absence seemed to arise, not from any need of him, but from that tormenting desire which mortals universally feel for the possession of objects beyond their reach. Search was commanded for the truant, unsuccessfully ; and supper was begun.

The eastern side of the hill on which the tower is built is bold and rugged, being steep and difficult of access. At its base the Darwen forces itself through a narrow channel, its waters tumbling over huge heaps of rock, and reeling in mazy eddies to the echo of their own voice. The river seems to have worked itself a passage through the chasm ; and the boiling and noisy torrent, struggling to free itself from observation, foams and bellows like the gorge of a whirlpool, from whence originates its name, " The Orr," not unlike in sound to the effect that is here produced.

On the opposite shore the rock is nearly perpendicular, the dog-rose and the bramble hiding its crevices, and the crawling campanula wreathing its bright bells about the sterile front, from which its sustenance was derived, like youth clinging to the cold and insensate bosom of age. The declivity sloping abruptly from the tower was then covered with a wild and luxuriant underwood, stunted ash and hazel twigs thinly occupying a succession of ridges to the summit. Here and there a straggling oak threw its ungraceful outline over a narrow path, winding immediately under the base of the hill—its bare roots undermined by oozings from above, and giving way to the slow but certain operation of the destroyer. From the heat and dryness of the season the torrent was much diminished, rushing into a succession of deep pools, which the full free light of heaven had scarcely ever visited. Now dimly seen through the hot gleams

of a summer evening, they seemed wavering in the lurid reflection from surrounding objects.

Up this narrow gorge had strayed Sir John Finett with a companion, too busily engaged, it might seem, in their own converse to note the lapse of time, and the probable consequences of the king's displeasure.

"Fair lady," said the gay cavalier, "I am not more bold than my vocation holdeth meet. Your cousin, at Myerscough, was so liberal of his own suit, and my countenance therein, that he hath entrusted this love-billet to my keeping, warning me that I should let none but yourself be privy to its delivery."

"Would that my cousin had eschewed letter-writing! I am averse to his suit, and yet he ceaseth not to vex me continually with his drivelling ditties. His ballad-mongering to these 'eyne' alone would set up one of your court rhymesters for a twelvemonth."

"Yet may aversion cease, and your mislikings be not over difficult to assuage," said the courtier.

"I doubt not but Sir John Finett speaks of the capricious and changeable humours he hath witnessed; —our country fashion holdeth not so lightly by its affection or disfavour."

"Then there be doubtless of those stout vessels that shall never leak out a lady's favour. That this lot were mine!"

Sir John, perhaps unconsciously, threw his dark eyes full upon the lady, who blushed deeply; but the gloom concealed this outward show of feeling, too unformed and indefinable for thought. She spoke not; but the knight, under cover of his errand, continued the discourse without awakening her alarm. He excelled in that specious, though apparently heedless raillery, which is so apt to slip without suspicion into a lady's ear; and he could ply his suit, under this disguise, with such seeming artlessness and unconcern, that a lodgement in the citadel was sometimes effected ere the garrison was aware of the intrusion.

This fair dame, Grace Gerard, was of gentle blood, a daughter of the Gerards of Ashton Hall, near Lancaster. At the earnest solicitations of the Hoghton family, she was induced to remain a guest with them during the royal visit. Of a sweet and excellent temper, her form and face were its very image and counterpart. The world was to her untried—fresh, fair, unblemished—she looked upon it as though she were newly alighted on " some heaven-kissing hill," from whence the whole round of life's journey was blent and mingled with the glowing beam that now encompassed her. Alas! that youth should so soon pluck and eat of the " Tree of Knowledge ! " that a nearer approach should dissipate the illusion ! that our path, as it winds through those scenes we have looked on from afar in the light of our imagination, should at every step discover the tracks of misery—a world of wretchedness and of woe !

Sir John, with all his faults, inseparable it may be from the society into which he had been thrown, was not vicious. Loving and beloved, he existed but as the object of woman's regard. This foible he indulged not farther. But many a bright eye waxed dim—many a fond heart was withered, in the first spring-tide of its affection.

" Now that I have granted you this audience for my cousin's sake, and given him my reply, it is needful that we return. Besides, the night is coming on. The king and the feast demand your presence."

" Nay, thou cruel tyrant, tell me not of my chain. The king's humour I can control, but——"

" Presume not on the favour of princes ; an ancient but wholesome caution," said the maiden, laughing at Sir John, who, for the first time, seemed to be aware of his duty, and was puzzling his brains for an excuse.

The bell now rang out lustily from the Tower, increasing the knight's perplexity. The innocent cause of this delay only laughed at this concern, singing, as though to herself :

" ' The bell has been rung, and the mass hath been sung,
And the feast eat merrily,
Merrily ! '

and the king's master of the ceremonies absent."

The aspect of affairs was now more serious than he had anticipated. Supper was indeed commencing. Some scheme or witty device must be hit upon—speedily, too, or the king's displeasure might be difficult to assuage.

" But for thy bright eyes and fair speech, my lady Grace, I had not been amissing from my duty." He looked thoughtful, and it was the maiden's turn to rally.

They ascended the hill by a short but steep path. As they approached the summit, he seemed to awake from a deep reverie.

" Now have you granted me an audience for a lover's sake—to-morrow, let me be the ambassador for another."

" I have no lovers from whom I would care to be honoured with an embassy ! "

" None ? " said the knight, peering curiously, as if he would penetrate the folds of a real Flanders scarf she had thrown carelessly about her head :

" ' Then will I be thy lover true,
And thou my beauteous queene,'

through these gay festivities. But mark me ! "—He became serious on the sudden. The expression of his eye, from its general character of assumed gaiety, was changed into that of tenderness and respect. " Mark me, lady, I would be spared the horror of a rival. Will you be my partner in these pageantries—my mistress unto whom I may render mine homage and my trust ? "

" 'Tis a brave speech, Sir John," cried the lady, as though wishful to divert the subject. " My cousin tells me that you are a knight of great courage and

renown, but he sayeth not aught of your disposition to outrival him in heroics. Good-bye—a promise made is a promise broken ; therefore, I'll offer none. I meet you not to-night at the feast, having obtained mine excuse."

Saying this, she bounded from him ere he was aware, and was speedily out of sight.

He was not a little chagrined at her abrupt departure ; yet her very carelessness, and the open simplicity of her manner, only served to fix her the more deeply in his thoughts. But a problem of greater difficulty was to be resolved than how to fix the chameleon hue of woman's thought. He had a king to pacify—wayward as a child, fickle as a lady's favour. Unless he could acquit himself by some witty quibble or device, he might bid adieu to the gaieties over which he presided. The time was short, and his wit must needs be ambling. As he passed through the court, revolving many plans for his deliverance, he was aware of a loud dispute between the two household divinities we have before noticed. Words were nigh being exchanged for blows, but they stayed out of respect to the intruder.

Leaving Sir John to confer with those doughty disputants, let us follow the king to supper. Space forbids that we describe the wonders of this feast, and the dainties that were provided—how the swans were roasted, and the herons eaten cold—how pies were baked of the red deer, and the wild boar, not a whit too small for the reception of any moderate-sized Christian subject of his Majesty's. There were turkeys, quails, poults, and plovers ; but of pheasants only two, and one for the king. The greatest triumph, however, was reserved for the confections ; an artificial hen was here served of puff-paste ; her wings displayed, sitting upon eggs of the same materials. In each of these was enclosed a fat lark roasted, and seasoned with pepper and ambergris.

They sat down, but the master of the ceremonies

was still absent ; whereupon the king, much distempered thereby, called out to Sir George Goring :

" Our mummer and our dancer being departed—whilk thing, aforetime, we did maist righteously inhibit —thinkest thou, he may not henceforth eschew our service ? "

" My liege, your Grace's commands were to seek him a full hour agone, but the sacred deer hath taken to covert. He was, peradventure, afraid of the hunting, and liketh his own neck better than the sport. He careth not, methinks, to show his face that turns his back on his comrade's peril."

" May be," said Buckingham, " your Majesty's favour is not so winsome as a lady's cheek. I would wager my cap, Jack Finett hath found a smoother tongue, but a harder service, than your Majesty's."

" O' my saul—if I thought so," said the monarch, as he threw down a spoonful of buttered pease, " I would send him to the Tower, and he should write a book on Hercules his distaff."

" Or Omphale's spindle," said a voice at the lower end of the hall, which, issuing from a mask, closely fitted, sounded wondrously hollow and portentous. A profound silence ensued—all eyes being turned towards the speaker, who was no less a personage than the first household god, attired in his proper suit. He approached the king's table, waving his hand in token of attention :

> " The knight ye speak of, mark me well,
> I've just drawn from the castle-well ! "

" Mercy on us," cried Sir Richard Hoghton. " The draw-well is more than eighty yards deep. Thou art a lying deity, and shalt be banished from this bright Olympus."

But the deity, nothing abashed, thus continued :

> " How came he thus, I dare not tell ;
> My brother may the mystery dispel."

He stooped down—rising again to the astonished eyes of the fair dames and nobles at the upper bench, in the forester's habit of Kendal green, with cloak and doublet of the same colour.

"What's now?" said James. "Witchery and fause negromancie, o' my troth. 'Tis treason, Sir Richard, to use glamour in the king's presence."

But the sylvan god continued in the doggerel of his predecessor:

> "Sir John to be forgiven, would hope;
> He had been drowned, but for the rope!"

"Ay," said the king, chuckling at this opportunity, purposely given, for a display of his wit—"he'll be hanged, na doot, na doot."

"Prythee, Sylvanus, or whatever thou be, bring Sir John hither, that he may dry his web in the hot sunshine of a lady's glance," said Villiers, with an ill-suppressed sneer.

Again this Proteus was transformed. Doffing his habit, Sir John Finett stood confessed before them. He knelt penitently before the king, humbly assuring his Majesty that he had been preparing this device, and many others, to please and surprise him; but that, through the bungling of some, and the bashfulness of others, he was obliged to enact the parts himself. This excuse the king was graciously pleased to accept, commending him for his great diligence and zeal.

The night now wore on with much outward show of mirth and revelry; but the king went early to rest, purposing to rise betimes.

On the following day he went out again with a great company, and killed a brace of stags, which mighty achievement, by authentic record, we find was accomplished before dinner—the king alone being able to bring down the venison.

We willingly pass over this day's banquet; nor

do we care to chronicle the feats of Morris the head-cook, and his deputies of the ranges and the pastries. The boiling and roasting of poults and pullets, and the construction of comfits and confections, we consign to everlasting oblivion.

When the king rose from table, about four o'clock, as we find it in the private journal of one present, he purposed to view the alum-mines, about two miles distant from the Tower ; but, being eager for the sport, he went forth again a-hunting. He shot at a stag and missed. The next bolt broke the thigh-bone, and the dog being long in coming, Lord Compton despatched the poor beast, whereby his capture was effected. We forbear to dwell on this, and much more of the like interest, returning with the king to supper, where the beauteous Grace Gerard was present, and Sir John Finett, her true knight and devoted slave. Dr. Morton, then Bishop of Chester, was chaplain, doling out a long Latin grace with great unction.

The music had ceased, the second course being just served, when a signal was given for the king's pledge.

" Let each one pledge the fairest," cried the royal toast-master, moved to some unwonted gallantry by approximation with the fair and lusty dames about his person. For it hath been wittily if not wickedly said by a popular writer in another place that James was in all things like unto Solomon, save in the matter of women.

Now was there a brave stir throughout the assembly, such pledging of mistresses, and challenging of cups that nothing could be like unto it.

" To the bright eyes and peerless grace of the lady Grace Gerard," said Sir John Finett, draining his goblet to the uttermost ;—and the maiden's cheek glowed like a furnace.

" Said I not that he could win a lady's grace sooner than a monarch's disfavour ? Nay, your Majesty, I but meant that Sir John conveys the fairest eyes and

the warmest hearts into his own keeping, like an *Ochus-Bochus*," said Buckingham, looking envious at the distinction he had gained.

"I see plainly that Truth is hidden in a well," said Goring drily.

Sir John Finett, courtier and dissembler as he was, could scarcely hide the truth of this sally. But he quickly recovered his self-possession ere the king's eye could detect a change. Yet did he not escape the vigilance of his two friends, who suspected the real cause of his absence on the preceding night.

"Thou shalt be her true knight to-morrow, and she shall be queen of our sports," said the king, graciously extending his hand to the blushing maiden.

But this speech pleased not some of the courtiers, and Buckingham, having his eye on this fair flower, secretly resolved that Sir John should not enjoy its fragrance unmolested.

On the following morning, being Sunday, there came a great company of peasants and handicraftsmen—notorious idlers about the parish—with a petition, wherein it was shown that the loyal and peaceable inhabitants of Lancashire had been long hindered of their usual diversions on Sundays and other holidays by the rigour of Puritans, Precisians, and such like folk,* who, being enemies to all innocent and lawful mirth, did mightily begrudge and maliciously restrain their use. These petitioners, therefore, prayed his Majesty, "that he would not forbid their exercising of all honest and lawful recreation, such as dancing of men and women, archery, running, leaping, and vaulting; nor prohibit the use of May-games, May-poles, morris dances, and other like lawful sports, so that the same should not impediment or cause neglect of divine service."

The ground of this complaint was laid in the time of

* Some say this petition was presented at Myerscough, but we incline to the opinion here given.

Elizabeth, who, in order to reform the manners of the people, instituted a high commission in the year 1579. The commissioners were Henry Earl of Derby, Henry Earl of Huntingdon, William Lord Bishop of Chester, and others. At their sittings, which were held in Manchester, they issued orders throughout the county against "pipers and minstrels playing, making, and frequenting bear-baiting and bull-baiting on the Sabbath-days, or upon any other days in time of divine service, and also against superstitious ringing of bells, wakes, and common feasts; drunkenness, gaming, and other vicious and unprofitable pursuits." These restrictions the royal pedant thought incompatible with the public weal, and graciously answered the petitioners in such-wise that he would have these over-righteous zealots rebuked; that it was a misuse of their authority; and that he would not only grant the humble request of his subjects, but, on that very evening, he would have a masque and an allegory, with dancing and other like diversions, by the lords and other nobility there present.

Such was the origin of the famous *Book of Sports*. His Majesty, on returning to the capital, issued a proclamation,* stating:

"That in his progress through Lancashire he found it necessary to rebuke some Puritans and precise people, and took order that the said unlawful carriage should not be used by any of them hereafter, in the prohibiting and unlawfully punishing his good people, for using their lawful recreations and honest exercises upon Sundays, after divine service." "His Majesty further saw that his loyal subjects in all other parts of the kingdom did suffer in the same kind, though not, perhaps, in the same degree, as in Lancashire; and he did therefore, in his princely wisdom, publish a declaration to all his loving subjects concerning lawful sports to be used on Sundays and festivals."—Published by his royal com-

* Royal proclamation, May 21, 1618.

mand in the year 1618, under the title of the *Book of Sports*. The royal visit to Lancashire proved ultimately of more importance to the civil and ecclesiastical establishments of the kingdom than could have been anticipated either by the king or his subjects. This infamous *Book of Sports* formed the first link in that mysterious chain of events, ending in the downfall of the Stuarts, and their exile and expulsion from the throne.

The gladsome tidings having been communicated to the petitioners, with one accord they galloped off, shouting and huzzaing, to the great annoyance of all peaceable and sober-minded persons, and the great dishonour of that holy day.

The king attended divine service at the chapel, where Dr. Morton preached, commanding and exhorting to an obedience well pleasing to their Maker ; inasmuch as it was rendered to the vicegerent of heaven, the high and mighty and puissant James, defender of the Faith, and so forth. After this comfortable and gracious doctrine, there was a rush-bearing* and a piping before the king in the great quadrangle. Robin Hood and Maid Marian, with the fool and hobby-horse, were, doubtless, enacted to the jingling of morris-dancers and other profanities.

These fooleries put the king into such good humour

* This ceremony was formerly used for the conveyance of rushes intended to be strewed in the church upon the clay floors between the benches. It is now generally known but as an unmeaning pageant still practised in the northern and eastern parts of Lancashire, for the purpose of levying contributions on the inhabitants. An immense banner of silk adorned with tinsel and gay devices, precedes the rush-cart, wherein the rushes, neatly woven and smooth cut, are piled up and decorated with flowers and ribands, in rustic taste. The cart, thus laden, is drawn round to the dwellings of the principal inhabitants, by morris-dancers, who perform an uncouth dance, attended by a man in motley attire, a sort of nondescript, made up of the ancient fool and Maid Marian. This personage jingles a horse-collar hung with bells, which forms not an unsuitable accompaniment to the ceremony.

that he was more witty in his speech than ordinary. Some of these sayings have been recorded, and amongst the rest that well-known quibble which has been the origin of an absurd mistake, still current through the county, respecting the sirloin. It is said to have been knighted there by his Majesty, who found, such were his knight-making propensities, that other subjects were exhausted.

The occasion, as far as we have been able to gather, was thus :—Whilst he sat at meat, casting his eyes upon a noble *surloin* at the lower end of the table, he cried out :

" Bring hither that *surloin*, sirrah, for, 'tis worthy of a more honourable post, being, as I may say, not *sur*loin but *sir*loin, the noblest joint of all " ; which ridiculous and desperate pun raised the wisdom and reputation of England's Solomon to the highest.

Great was the stir and preparation for the evening masque ; a pageant containing many allegories and devices ; dancing and merry games, with all other " lawful recreations and honest amusements." Little heed was given, we fear, to their Maker's service, these vain follies running in the heads and filling the thoughts of the few who chose to attend in the chapel ; the greater portion were preparing for the entertainment, into which service they entered heartily, and without grudge.

Sir George Goring and Sir John Finett were verily indefatigable on the occasion, drilling and marshalling men, women, and children ; conning their lessons, and correcting the awkward and ridiculous movements and mistakes of their pupils. Hobbe and the house-steward were the foremost in their parts, having important functions allotted to them ; one to grunt and howl in the similitude of a huge bear, and the other to roar in lieu of a lion, before the " *Bower of Beautie*," for such was the title or motto of the pageant. Nor was Sir John lacking in due homage to his mistress ; she was

appointed to enact "The Queen of Beautie." It was after much solicitation that she consented, receiving with great gravity and attention the instructions of her accomplished preceptor.

The day was nigh spent and the sun fast sinking on the ocean, now waiting with a chariot of flame to conduct him to other skies.

Grace was just finishing her toilet, and her maid adjusting the last plait in her head-dress, when a low and guarded knock announced a visitor. The door was slightly opened, when a messenger threw in a gay billet and departed. It was superscribed thus:—"*To the Fairest, These.*"

With a quickened pulse and tremulous hand, she glanced over the page, elaborately penned as follows:

"The Bower of Beautie hath a snake; beware that he come not nigh thee, for his tooth has venom, and his tail a sting.

"From the mask with the black visard and silver mantle.

THESE."

She had barely finished the perusal, when there came tripping in the page of Sir John Finett, carrying a sealed billet redolent with the most costly perfume. The superscription was precisely similar, and nearly in the same hand: "To the Fairest, These."

She hastily broke open the packet.

"Beauteous and most matchless queen! jealous of thy coming, the orb of day hasteneth to hide himself in Thetis's lap. He leaveth thee our luminary in his stead, whose twin stars shall so outmimic day that his brightness shall not be remembered. Truly am I in great heaviness and sorrow, seeing that I cannot be with you in the opening of the pageant, by reason of mine office, and my duty to the king. Yet will I not leave you without a protector My trusty friend Weldon will enact your faithful knighte.

He weareth a black visard and mantle of spotted silver, and will accompany you to the bower, from whence he delivereth the queene and her distressed damsels out of durance. When the dancing begins, expect me.

THINE."

Little space was left for deliberation. The bell rang out its signal for the actors to arrange themselves; hearing which, she thrust the billets behind her stomacher and hastened to the great court, where, on a platform supported by four wheels, was builded a sort of hut, decorated in a tawdry and fanciful style, and ycleped "The Bower of Beautie."

Into this bower the queen was to be conducted, but the uproar and confusion was indescribable; strange and antic figures hurrying to and fro, seeking their companions, and crying lustily for their places. Sir John Finett and Sir George Goring fulfilled the office of whippers-in, attempting to establish order out of these undisciplined elements. Grace drew back; but suddenly there came forth an armed knight from the bower towards her, wearing a black visor and a mantle of spotted silver, courteously beseeching her that she would accompany him to her station. A great curtain of figured arras hung in front, concealing the interior, where the queen and her maidens were supposed to be held captive. Grace stepped into this temporary confinement, in which were four other ladies masked, who graciously saluted their queen. The black-faced visor having seated himself, the arras was again let down; when several men bedizened with ribands and nosegays, wheeled off the vehicle to its destination on the green.

The bower was garnished with roses, gilliflowers, pinks, and odoriferous herbs. Garlands of artificial flowers were interspersed; likewise imitations in satin, silk and gold, of various trees, herbs, and fruits, not to be found in those parts. All this had been accom-

plished with great pains by the ladies of the queen's mimic court, Sir John Finett superintending "*The Bower of Beautie,*" as his peculiar province. To Sir George Goring were allotted the bears, satyrs, imps, angels, gods, and other like rabble, who were taught with much labour and difficulty, in so short a space, their several parts.

Sir John Finett had received a mandate to be near the king during the acts, that he might be instructed in their several uses and designs, Buckingham having signified his wish to sport a mask on the occasion; Sir John, therefore, much to his regret, was completely debarred from approaching his mistress.

The king's coming was announced by a flourish of trumpets, and a loud bray from the delighted multitude, who sent up a shout that shook the very foundations.

Under a pavilion of crimson cloth, decked with fringes and valences of gold, walked forth the monarch. He leaned familiarly on the arm of his host, who, together with Sir John Finett, was in immediate attendance. After the king's train had passed, came a troop of morris-dancers, and the hobby-horse, who frolicked in a most ungainly fashion round the Bower of Beauty, kissing hands, and making many salutations towards their enthralled queen. Next came out a bear and a lion, accompanied by a thing intended to represent an ape, whose office it was to torment these grave animals with his tricks. But so encumbered were they in their disguise—a heavy covering of bucks' skins and long wool—that they had much ado to keep on their clothes, while attempting to resent the indignities they endured.

"Hang thee, Will—keep thy paws off my tail," said lion; "dost not see I shall be uncovered before the king?"

"I'll baste thine hide," said bear, "if thou meddlest any more with mine."

The ape had settled himself on the back of this august-looking animal, from whence he was suddenly

dislodged, much to the delight and entertainment of the king, who laughed heartily at his disaster. The ravenous animals were on their way to the bower, there to watch for the captives, making great demonstrations all the while of their bloodthirsty intent.

Bear and lion accordingly squatted down before it, making as though they would gladly have been at supper on the fair carcases of those within. Anon comes a mighty magician, with a long beard, and a wand of some ells in extent, purposing to effect the deliverance of the captives; but the beasts rushed upon him, and in a trice brought him to the ground. At this juncture the Silver Knight—showing thereby the superiority of true valour over false gramarye—should have issued from the bower, rescued the magician, and slain the beasts, opening a way for the escape of these imprisoned damsels, who were to come forth dancing, and representing a fair masque before the king;—but the magician remained unrescued, while bear and lion lay growling for a long space, not knowing what else to do. They looked about wistfully, not choosing to feast on their prostrate victim. At last, finding no change in the posture of affairs, they fairly stood erect, much to the marvel and amusement of the spectators, running off on their hind legs amid the shouts and derision of the assembly.

Sir John, apprehending some mistake, left the king for a moment to see how matters stood; but Goring had lifted up the arras, and, lo! the knight with the black visor and mantle of silver was not there, neither was the Queen of Beauty in her bower. The four disconsolate maidens still sat waiting for their cue, and expecting release. This was an unlooked-for disaster. The pageant was at a stand. On inquiry, the maidens told how that the gallant knight and the peerless queen had departed before the king's arrival, saying they would return anon.

Sir John was bewildered and alarmed. The Silver

Knight was trusty, and no suspicion crossed him from that source ; yet was their absence wholly unaccountable. The king, seeing some mistake in the unravelling or conception of the plot, good-naturedly commanded the minstrels to strike up a favourite tune ; at the hearing of which a number of masks immediately mustered to begin dancing in the soft and dewy twilight. Amongst the rest came in Buckingham, negligently attired and without his visor.

"I thought thee hidden among the maskers," said the king.

"Ay, my liege, a short space ;—but the night is hot, and I am something distempered and weary in this turmoil."

Buckingham looked flushed and agitated, strangely differing from his usual manner. It was not unobserved by the king, who attributed the change to illness.

"Thou shalt continue about our person," said the monarch. "Jack, see to the sports : the pageant hath suffered greatly from thine absence. I do think the Queen of Beauty hath played thee false."

Buckingham took his usual station by the king ; and Sir John Finett, in great dolour, went forth in search of his mistress. He questioned the guests diligently, but could gain no further tidings, save that she had been seen by many in company with the Silver Knight. Every minute added to his uneasiness ; thoughts of a wild and terrible import haunted him. In vain he tried to shake off these intruders—they came like shadows, horrible and indistinct. His naturally sensitive and sanguine temperament, as prone to the anticipation of evil as of delight, was a curse, and not a blessing. Departed hopes may fling a deeper shadow even on the brow of Despair !—and rayless was the night which visited his spirit. It was now too evident—for he was no novice in the science—that his admiration had awakened one dormant but hallowed affection, long

lulled in the soft lap of pleasure. The maiden, with whom it was his sole aim to pass a few hours of pleasantry and amusement, had enthralled him by so sudden a spell, that he was more than half inclined to believe in the boasted skill and exploits of the sex, which has rendered Lancashire so famous. Her unaccountable absence impressed itself strangely upon his thoughts. He was in love!—and he writhed at the discovery; but he would have given worlds just then to have proclaimed it at this mistress's feet.

Scarcely conscious how the night wore on, he was obliged to act his part. Supper was announced; and he took his station where he could see the guests unmask as they entered to the banquet.

The tables were nearly filled, but the Silver Knight and his fair lady were still absent. Grace Gerard is doubtless in her own chamber, was the host's reply to some inquiry from Sir John: she had craved excuse from some slight indisposition. But this did not satisfy him to whom it was addressed: he suspected her chamber would be found unoccupied. His heart felt wasted and desolate; it was as if the whole fair face of nature were blotted out—the light being gone which rendered it visible.

"What ho!" said the king, "bring my Sienna knight a cup of hot sack and a merry-thought, for he seems melancholic and watchful—a wary eye, but a silent tongue. Sir John, are your wits a wool-gathering with your queen?"

"I am in my widowhood, most gracious prince—my queen having departed."

"More fool thou, to fling thy heart after thy wits. Come, honest Jack, we'll have some minstrelsy after the feast—a merry troll and a short one."

Sir John was well skilled in handling the lute and rebeck. He had been early trained to their use; and many a kind glance and tender word he had won thereby.

The feast was over and those hushed halls thrilled to the following ditty :

1.

" They bade me sing, they bade me smile,
They bade my heart be gay ;
They called my spirit forth, to while
The laughing hours away.
I've sung, I've smiled : where'er my path
Mirth's dazzling meteors shine :
All hearts have owned its magic power,
And all are glad but mine.

2.

" I've soothed the darkest surge of woe,
And many a bosom blessed ;
Forbade the sufferer's tear to flow,
And brought the weary rest :
I've poured upon the bleeding heart
The balm of Hope,—the shrine
Where holier, happier thoughts shall dwell ;—
But who shall gladden mine ?

3.

" Forgive ; 'tis but one short complaint,
One pang I would reveal :
The wretch upon the torturing rack
Is not forbid to feel !
Then laugh,—let merry hearts to-night
Their brightest wreaths entwine :
The flowers that bloom on every breast,
Will, withering, fade on mine ! "*

Many were the bright eyes glittering on him through their long silken lashes ; but Sir John looked downward

* See Note at the end.

—diligently noting something extraordinary in the disposition of his shoe-roses, or in the tie of his garter.

"One raven will set another croaking," said Sir George.

"That we may escape a concert so detestable," cried out Buckingham, "let Sir John Finett follow me, and we will reel without fair dames, until care whirls off like sling-stones."

"And may he that tires first fiddle the witches' jig," said the sapient king.

A burst of harsh music followed, and Sir John's feebly tinkling strings were thrown aside. Never had he wished so anxiously for one short hour of quietness; and right fain he was when the king retired to his chamber. His duties for that day were over, and he strolled out from the hot and oppressive atmosphere into a calm quiet moonlight. The cool breeze came like a healing balm upon his spirit, the soft dew fell upon his cheek—but the fire in his veins burnt fiercely. His mistress's form, her face, the sweet influence of her smile, were fixed indelibly on his heart. Away from the bustle and cares of office—which, like waves on the surface, for awhile effaced their image—the whole beauteous impression was revealed before him in all its loveliness and truth. His heart bounded at the thought:—it was but for a moment. Again he stood, hopeless and desolate, gazing upon the soft mist-wreath in the valley, as though expecting it would render up the form of his beloved.

Suddenly the short swift steps of a steed were heard hurrying up the avenue. A horseman approached the gateway: it was his friend, the *soi-disant* knight of the silver mantle!

"How now, Weldon!*—whither have thy unlucky

* This person is supposed to be the writer of a curious satire (Harl. MSS. 5191), called a Description of Scotland. Weldon's name is not attached to it in the MS., but it is duly ascribed to him by Sir Walter Scott, in his description of Holyrood

familiars carried thee? Hast thou bestridden the enchanted horse, or wert thou bidden to a witch-feast?"

"I have been to Myerscough with your message—and the pains I have had for my labour."

"My message!" said Sir John with amazement: "I sent thee on no other errand than to guard the lady, whom thou hast either made away with or she hath slipped from thine hold."

"You are pleasant, Sir John. Your tricks are well enough in court-hours. Come, be serious, and tell me thou hast had a fool's errand out of me."

"I never was more serious in my life, Weldon, I do vouch, as my head shall swing safely on its pivot. But who gave thee a message—and to whom?"

"To our fair hostess at Myerscough. Thy page thrust a scrap of writing into my hand after prayers. The request was, that I should see the accompanying billet safely delivered, and with mine own hand, without loss of time. It was one of your curiously-folded fantastic love-billets, as I thought. Knowing I could well be spared hence, I immediately took horse, and came in a bath of foam to the lady; but when she opened her pretty token, she drew herself erect with great majesty. 'Tell Sir John Finett,' said she, 'that when he next sends thee forth on his fooleries, to choose another butt; to shoot his arrows where they will stick, or his goose-feathers may fly back again.'"

Horror almost deprived Sir John of utterance. That some foul play had been meditated, and in all probability accomplished, was but too plain; but how, or by whom, was inscrutable as ever.

The page was straitly questioned; but he merely said that his message was given him by some person

Chapel, in the *Antiquities of Scotland*. Sir Anthony Weldon accompanied the king into Scotland; but that he returned with him is not so certain, one of his letters saying he should return by sea. By this, however, may be understood his return to the court at Edinburgh, having had leave of absence to visit his friends in London.

PUBLIC
DEPTFORD

he did not recognize in the crowd at the chapel doors, who said he was to seek Weldon forthwith, and deliver him the papers from his master. What course to adopt, or where to begin their search, were questions alike embarrassing and impossible to answer. In the end they determined to lay the matter before the king on the morrow.

It may be needful to go back a short space to "The Bower of Beautie," wherein the knight of the silver mantle, having safely ensconced himself, as the reader may remember, the arras was let down; after which, being wheeled away to their destination, they were to await for the commencement of the masque. But the Silver Knight, lifting up the curtain, observed they were much too early for the performance, and courteously entreated the lady that she would alight. The evening was hot, and the bower close and oppressive. An hour might, in all probability, elapse ere their presence would be required. Grace, trusting to her companion, quitted the car, strolling out amongst the masks. Gradually they left the main crowd, unconsciously approaching the steep brow of the hill, where, looking towards the east, they beheld the broad red moon swinging out from the blue horizon. The ıoud hum of the revellers came softly and pleasantly on the ear. It was an hour of quietness and delight—a few hasty, happy moments snatched from these gaudy hours—the pomp and circumstance of life. Would that Sir John had been here in lieu of his friend! thought Grace. No, she did not think so, but she felt as though such a thought might have been nursed into being with little effort. They were now stealing down the hill, and the dark waters of the Orr were leaping and bubbling at their feet.

"We must return," said the maiden, looking up, alarmed at seeing, for the first time, that they were cut off from all connection and intercourse with their companions. Her attendant was a perfect stranger, except

in name, and though counselled to rely implicitly on his care by the master of the ceremonies himself, she felt her situation embarrassing and unpleasant.

"And why must we return?" said the mask. The tone startled her; its expression was now soft and beseeching, as though he had before spoken in a masked voice.

"Why!" said she, looking as though she would have pierced through his disguise.

"Nay, whet not thy glance so keenly. I am not what I seem, and yet am not unseemly."

"Your jests had been better timed had they taken a fitter season. I must hence."

"Go not, my beauteous queen," said the stranger, taking her hand, which she caught from him with indignation and alarm. She was darting up the crag, but was again detained.

"I will worship thee:—thou shalt be my star—the axle of my thoughts. All——"

"Unhand me, sir, or I'll call those who have the power to punish as well as to humble thy presumption!"

"Whom wilt thou call, my pretty lamb? The wolf? The snake is scotched in the bower, and I but beseech thy gratitude. How that look of scorn becomes thee! Pout not so, my queen, or thou wilt indeed make an excuse for my rudeness."

"How? Again this insult! Begone, or thou shalt rue that ever thy thought escaped thy tongue. I'll report thee to thy betters."

"My betters! and who be they, maiden? Thou knowest me not, *perdie*. Hath not Sir John Finett shorn his lovelocks and eschewed thy service after leaving thy bower the other night?"

This taunt raised her indignation to a blaze—her bosom swelled at the rebuke.

Still he retained her hand—with the other she clung to a withered tree, whose roots held insecurely by the

rock. Making another effort, she sprang from his grasp; but the tree was rent from its hold, and she fell with it to the edge of the precipice. Ere the Silver Knight could interpose, a faint shriek announced her descent; a swift crash was heard amongst the boughs and underwood—a groan and a rebound. He saw her disappear behind the crag. Then came one thrilling moment of terror, one brief pause in that death-like stillness, and a heavy plunge was heard in the gulf below! He listened—his perceptions grew more acute—eye and ear so painfully susceptible, and their sensibility so keen, that the mind scarcely distinguished its own reactions from realities—from outward impressions on the sense. He thought he heard the gurgle and the death-throe. Then the pale face of the maiden seemed to spring out from the abyss. He rushed down the precipice. Entangled in the copsewood and bushes, some time elapsed ere he gained the narrow path below. He soon found, as in most other situations, the shortest road the longest—that the beaten track would have brought him quicker to his destination; but these nice calculations were forgotten. All pranked out and bedizened as he was, the puissant knight plunged into the gulf; but his exertions were fruitless, and he gave up the search. His love for the maiden living and breathing did not prompt him to drown himself for her corpse. With hasty steps he regained the Tower, where he doffed his dripping garments unobserved.

Sir John Finett, by advice from his friend Weldon, determined on acquainting their host with the lady's disappearance. They had a shrewd suspicion that Buckingham was the contriver of this daring outrage; though from his great power, influence, and audacity, they had everything to fear and but little to hope from the result. Yet no time should be lost in the attempt.

As they entered the hall, Sir Gilbert Hoghton and several of the guests were still making merry after the

feast. Calling him aside, they communicated the dismal tidings.

"Grace Gerard amissing, say ye?"

"'Tis even so," said Sir John; "we have yet no clue to the search; but this night shall not pass without the attempt, at any rate. In the morning we will to the king with our complaint."

"Boy," said the baronet to his little henchman, "go to the woman's suite, and rouse Grace Gerard's maid."

"The woman was in the kitchen some half-hour agone, conveyed her mistress a warm draught, or some such puling diet," said the page.

"Haste," cried Sir John impatiently, marvelling at this unexpected intelligence,—"the lad is blinded by some misapprehension. I'll forfeit my best jewel she is not in her chamber. This interlude works i' the plot —part of the trickery now enacting."

But the page made a quick return.

"What news?" said Finett.

"The lady is gone to rest; something discomposed, though, and out of spirits. So says her maiden, whom I would have questioned more straitly, but she rebuked me sharply for my impertinence."

"Pray you send and question her," said Sir John.

"Nay," returned Sir Gilbert, smiling. "I'll be bound the lady is safe; and her maiden has other guess-matters to look to than letting out the secrets of her mistress's chamber."

They were obliged to rest satisfied, or rather unsatisfied, with this answer. But the mystery was more and more inexplicable. Either some laughable mistake or some deep-laid villany was intended. Sir John dared not pursue the subject to this extremity. He felt assured of her purity and honour. Her manners, so confiding and unsuspicious, showed a heart unacquainted with guile.

After a sleepless night Sir John arose, feverish and

unrefreshed. He threw open the window of his chamber, which looked into the courtyard. Near a side postern stood a grey palfrey, caparisoned for a lady's use, and impatiently awaiting its burden. The hour was too early for morning rambles, but the beast was evidently equipped for a journey. Two other steeds were now led forth, as if for the attendants. He caught a glimpse of Grace Gerard's maid, who seemed, by her dress, to be of the party whose movements he was so anxious to ascertain. He suspected this sudden departure was for the purpose of escaping without his observance. He hurried towards the stairs : just entering the corridor, he met Grace Gerard. She was evidently confused at his appearance. It was but for a moment ; her spirit grappled with the occasion ; and she replied firmly, and with becoming dignity, to his questions.

" Whither away, our beauteous queen ? " said he, bowing almost to the ground. " Are you bound for some isle of the Western Ind, getting the start of Phœbus in his nightly race to those gem-bearing climes ? Methinks the sun is departing from us, though but just risen."

" 'Tis my purpose to depart, Sir John. This clime is too bright, and its beams too fervid, for a lady's eye."

" One word in sober speech : Wherefore ? "

" I know your question, Sir John. Time hastens, and I reply. Your knight of the silver mantle I proclaim a recreant, as treacherous as he is base. Sir John, for my—no, for your own sake——"

" Another stole into his place," said he, interrupting her with great eagerness. " A base-born changeling ! —some villain, who, under this disguise, abused our honourable intent ; but say, peerless princess, to whose prowess we owe your rescue."

" 'Tis my first venture into the unhallowed limits of your licentious court ; and through the grace that hath preserved me harmless, I here resolve it shall be

my last. By your instructions, Sir John, I relied implicitly on the protection of your friend. He would fain have abused his trust, but I escaped from the offered insult. Struggling to free my hand from his grasp, by yonder hill-side, I lost my footing. I fell down the steep unhurt. Fear lent me unwonted strength and I escaped unseen, round the narrow pathway. My discourteous knight thought, doubtless, I had tumbled into the roaring abyss ; for the night mist hung below, and I heard a huge fragment of rock loosened in my descent, plunge into the dimly rolling waters. Now, hear me : my resolve is taken, and no earthly influence or persuasion shall stay me. I was bewildered, yet flattered by your follies : foolish and thoughtless enough to frolic and flutter on the very brink of a precipice. I was dazzled by the glittering but dangerous excitement. Conscience spoke, but I durst not listen. My course of life hitherto has been through scenes of gentleness and peace, and I could not look on your bustle and dissipation without alarm. Yet was I persuaded to mingle in your sports yesterday—that day hallowed by the last fiat of its Creator, wherein the soul, freed awhile from the cares of earth, may prostrate itself in homage before Him who said, 'It is mine!' Justly punished for trifling with my better thoughts, my escape shall not be without its acknowledgment."

Sir John was silent. She stood before him like some purer, brighter thing than could be deemed akin to this polluted earth.

"Those siren waves were bearing me on to the gulf where——" She paused a moment, shuddering at the dark retrospect of the past. "Where all your pomp and pageantry will be overwhelmed, and yourselves, for ever, in the same irretrievable ruin!"

Sir John looked uneasy, and his eye wandered, as if in search of some object wherewith to throw off these gloomy anticipations. The maiden again spoke :

"It seemed as though a veil, invisible heretofore, were suddenly undrawn. The glory and the baseness, the splendour and the pollution, were at once revealed. The hand unseen had drawn it aside. I would now shun—I hope for ever—these paths of folly; and I bid farewell to your pleasures without a murmur or a regret."

Sir John, courtier though he was, ardently and willingly rendering homage at the shrine of pleasure and dissipation, was awe-struck. Conscience echoed a fearful response; and he shrank before the reproof he could not shun.

"Without regret!" said he, faltering and abashed. "I had hoped—perhaps wished—but it was too presumptuous. My purest thoughts would have sullied so pure a shrine."

"Stay, Sir John; though the confession be humbling to a maiden's pride, yet my heart tells me 'tis the last time we meet; and it is the only acknowledgment—I render it to your honesty and good faith." Her voice grew hesitating and tremulous. "There was a tendril twining about my heart; but it is wrung off, and I am again—alone!"

Her heart was full, and her whole frame convulsed by some overpowering emotion. An adieu died upon her lips; but she resolutely refused any further communication. Hastening to the courtyard, she mounted her little white palfrey, and quitted for ever those fascinating and dangerous allurements, which, having once felt, few have had the power to withstand.

We need scarcely add that, amid the gaieties and splendours by which the lover was enthralled, the recollection of Grace Gerard sometimes mingled in the revelries of this votary of pleasure. It often came as a warning and a rebuke. By degrees the impression grew less powerful. Each succeeding wave from the ever-tossing ocean left the traces less distinct, until they were overwhelmed in the dull tide of oblivion.

EAGLE CRAG, VALE OF TODMORDEN.

NOTE ON THE BALLAD, p. 351.

THE *music* to these words is *traditionary*, if we may be allowed the expression. It is one of the many wild and characteristic melodies floating about, perhaps unappropriated, on the popular breath, varied indefinitely according to the humour of the performer. The author has listened to several of these ditties; some of them he thinks peculiar to this and the neighbouring counties. They are generally sung by the labouring classes, and would, in many cases, defy any attempt to commit them to writing, being apparently founded upon a ratio of tones and semitones at variance with our diatonic scale. From this we might almost be led to imagine some truth in the theory that the ancients had different scales peculiar to their different moods; a theory which, however impossible it may be considered, is not without its advocates, who will perhaps not be displeased to find here some slight confirmation of their opinions. Yet in these songs the prevailing character of the minor key may generally be detected, which, from its being imperfect, and probably vitiated by the mistakes of these rustic melodists, may give a colour to the notion of a change in the scale.

The great antiquity of these melodies is unquestionable, and it would be an interesting inquiry to trace them back through remote ages, perhaps to the Jewish temple and the tent of the patriarchs. The author has found in them a strong resemblance to the Hebrew music, sounds which, since the captivity of the Jews in Babylon, and the destruction of their temple, 606 B.C., and in consequence of musical instruments being afterwards forbidden, they have clung to with increased tenacity, preservingtheir ancient melodies, and bequeathing them by memory from one generation to another with the same jealous care that a miser would his treasure, and as the last melancholy relics of a "kingdom passed away."

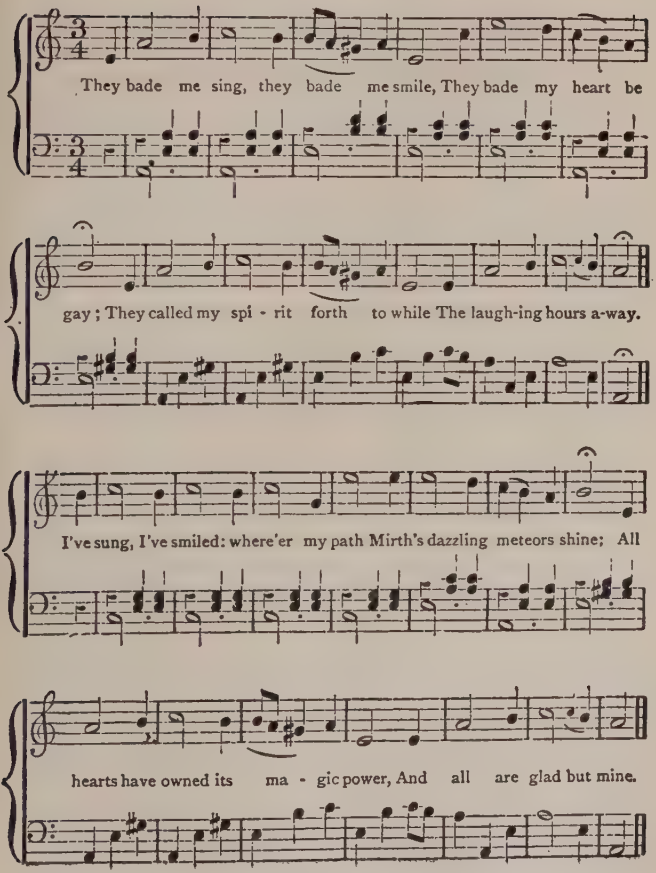
Algarotti says, "Those airs alone remain for ever engraven on the memory of the public, that paint images to the mind, or express the passions, and are for that reason called the speaking airs, because more congenial to nature, which can never be justly imitated but by a beautiful

simplicity, that will always bear away the palm from the most laboured refinement of art."

The author has ventured to give the following air, which he fancies would almost suggest the words of the song to which Sir John Finett is supposed to have appropriated it. As we have before mentioned, the tune is traditionary, possessing some of the peculiar characteristics we have described. It bears a considerable resemblance to the ancient Jewish music, and likewise to the airs generally given to the little snatches of old ballads in Shakespeare's plays, which are supposed to have been handed down successively from the performers in his time; being then probably "household" music more ancient than the ballads themselves. This opinion seems warranted by the poet himself in that beautiful allusion, with which he introduces one of the songs of the *Clown*, in Twelfth Night :—

"Mark it, Cesario; it is old and plain :
The spinsters and the knitters in the sun,
And the free maids that weave their thread with bones,
Do use to chant it; it is silly sooth,
And dallies with the innocence of love
Like the old age."

HOGHTON TOWER.


They bade me sing, they bade me smile, They bade my heart be
gay; They called my spi - rit forth to while The laugh-ing hours a-way.
I've sung, I've smiled: where'er my path Mirth's dazzling meteors shine; All
hearts have owned its ma - gic power, And all are glad but mine.

THE LANCASHIRE WITCHES

" More swift than lightning can I flye
About this aery welkin soone ;
And in a minute's space, descrye
Each thing that's done below the moone."

BEN JONSON.

" When I consider whether there are such persons as *witches*, my mind is divided : I believe, in general, that there is such a thing as witchcraft, but can give no credit to any particular instance of it."—ADDISON.

THE term witchcraft, says the historian of Whalley, is now " transferred to a gentler species of fascination, which my fair countrywomen still continue to exert in full force, without any apprehension of the county magistrates, or even of the king in council."

Far different was the application in days of old. The common parish witch is thus described by a contemporary writer, as an old woman " with a wrinkled face, a furred brow, a hairy lip, a gobber tooth, a squint eye, a squeaking voice, or a scolding tongue ; having a rugged coat on her back, a skull-cap on her head, and a dog or cat by her side." Such was the witch of real life when this superstition was so prevalent in our own neighbourhood, and even throughout England. From the beginning of the reign of James the First to the concluding part of the reign of James the Second, it may be considered as having attained the zenith of its popularity. " Witchcraft and kingcraft both came in with the Stuarts and went out with them." It was as if his *infernal* majesty had taken a lesson from his *sacred* majesty, and issued a book of sports for his loyal subjects. " The Revolution put to rights the faith of the country as well as its constitution." " The laws were more liberally interpreted and rationally administered.

The trade of witch-finding ceased to be reputable or profitable"; and that silly compilation, the "Demonology" of James, which, with the severe laws enacted against witchcraft by Henry the Eighth and Elizabeth, had conjured up more witches and familiars than they could quell, was consigned to the book-worm and the dust. It is said in the Arabian tales, that Solomon sent out of his kingdom all the demons that he could lay his hands on, packed them up in a brazen vessel, and cast them into the sea. But James, "our English Solomon," "imported by his book all that were flying about Europe, to plague the country, which was sufficiently plagued already in such a sovereign." This sapient ruler, who, it is said, "taught divinity like a king, and made laws like a priest," in the first year of his reign made it felony to suckle imps, &c. This statute, which was repealed March 24th, 1736, describes offences declared felonious, thus :—

"One that shall use, practise, or exercise any invocation or conjuration of any evil or wicked spirit, or consult, covenant with, entertain or employ, feed or reward, any evil or wicked spirit, to or for any intent or purpose; or take up any dead man, woman, or child, out of his, her, or their grave, or any other place where the dead body resteth; or the skin, bone, or other part of any dead person, to be employed or used in any manner of witchcraft, sorcery, charm, or enchantment; or shall practise or exercise any witchcraft, &c., whereby any person shall be killed, destroyed, wasted, consumed, pined, or lamed in his or her body, or any part thereof: such offenders, duly and lawfully convicted and attainted, shall suffer death."

As might be expected, witchcraft so increased in consequence of these denunciations, that, "in the course of fifty years following the passing of the Act, besides a great number of single indictments and executions, fifteen were brought to trial at Lancaster in 1612, and twelve condemned; in 1622, six were tried at York; 1634, seventeen condemned at Lancaster; 1644, sixteen were executed at Yarmouth; 1645, fifteen condemned at Chelmsford, and hanged; in the same and following year, about forty at Bury in Suffolk; twenty more in the county, and many at Hunting-

don ; and (according to the estimate of Ady) some thousands were burned in Scotland."

Popular hatred rendered the existence of a reputed witch so miserable, that persons bearing that stigma often courted death in despair, confessing to crimes which they had never committed, for the purpose of ridding themselves of persecution.

" One of the latest convictions was that of Amy Duny and Rose Cullender, before Sir Matthew Hale at Bury, in 1664. They were executed, and died maintaining their innocence." Their execution was a foul blot upon his name, and it is scarcely to be doubted but that they were the victims of imposture. It was clearly ascertained by experiments in the judge's presence, that the children who pretended to be bewitched, when their eyes were covered, played off their fits and contortions at the touch of some other person, mistaking it for that of the accused, yet, " he charged the jury without summing up the evidence, dwelling only upon the certainty of the fact that there were witches, for which he appealed to the Scriptures, and, as he said, to ' the wisdom of all nations ' ; and the jury having convicted, the nex morning left them for execution."

But we proceed with a few explanatory notices respecting that portion of the history of this superstition, which will matter in our text.

A number of persons, inhabitants of Pendle Forest, were apprehended in the year 1633, upon the evidence of Edmund Robinson, a boy about eleven years old, who deposed before two of his Majesty's justices at Padiham, that on All-Saints'-Day he was getting " bulloes," when he saw two greyhounds—a black one and a brown one—come running over the field towards him. When they came nigh they fawned on him, and he supposed they belonged to some of the neighbours. He expected presently that some one would follow ; but seeing no one, he took them by a string which they had tied to their collars, and thought he would hunt with them. Presently a hare sprang up near to him, and he cried, " Loo, loo," but the dogs would not run. Whereupon he grew angry, and tied them to a bush for the purpose of chastising them, but instead of the black greyhound he now beheld a woman, the wife of one

Dickisson, a neighbour ; the other was transformed into a little boy. At this sight he was much afraid, and would have fled ; but the woman stayed him and offered him a piece of silver like a shilling if he would hold his peace. But he refused the bribe ; whereupon she pulled out a bridle and threw it over the little boy's head, who was her familiar, and immediately he became a white horse. The witch then took the deponent before her, and away they galloped to a place called Malkin Tower, by the Hoarstones at Pendle. He there beheld many persons appear in like fashion ; and a great feast was prepared, which he saw, and was invited to partake, but he refused. Spying an opportunity, he stole away, and ran towards home. But some of the company pursued him until he came to a narrow place called " the Boggard-hole," where he met two horsemen ; seeing which, his tormentors left off following him. He further said, that on a certain day he saw a neighbour's wife, of the name of Loynd, sitting upon a cross piece of wood within the chimney of his father's dwelling-house. He called to her, saying, " Come down, thou Loynd wife," and immediately she went up out of sight. Likewise upon the evening of All-Saints before-named, his father sent him to seal up the kine, when, coming through a certain field, he met a boy who began to quarrel with him, and they fought until his face and ears were bloody. Looking down, he saw the boy had cloven feet, and away he ran. It was now nearly dark ; but he descried at a distance a light like a lantern. Thinking this was carried by some of his friends, he made all haste towards it, and saw a woman standing on a bridge, whom he knew to be Loynd's wife ; turning from her he again met with the boy, who gave him a heavy blow on the back, after which he escaped. On being asked the names of the women he saw at the feast, he mentioned seventeen persons, all of whom were committed to Lancaster for trial. They were found guilty, and sentenced to be executed. The judge, however, respited them, and reported the case to the king in council.

The celebrated John Webster, author of *The Discovery of Pretended Witchcraft*, afterwards took this young witch-finder in hand. He says :—

"This said boy was brought into the church at Kildwick (in Craven), a large parish church, where I, being curate there, was preaching in the afternoon, and was set upon a stall to look about him, which moved some little disturbance in the congregation for awhile. After prayers, I, inquiring what the matter was, the people told me it was the boy that discovered witches; upon which I went to the house where he was to stay all night, where I found him, and two very unlikely persons that did conduct him and manage the business.

"I desired to have some discourse with the boy in private; but that they utterly refused. Then, in the presence of a great many people, I took the boy near me, and said, 'Good boy, tell me truly and in earnest, didst thou see and hear such strange things of the meeting of witches as is reported by many that thou didst relate?'—But the two men, not giving the boy leave to answer, did pluck him from me, and said he had been examined by two *able* justices of the peace, *and they did never ask him such a question*. To whom I replied, the persons accused had the more wrong. As the laws of England, and the opinions of mankind then stood, a mad dog in the midst of a congregation would not have been more dangerous than this wicked and mischievous boy, who, looking around him, could, according to his own caprice, put any one or more of the people in peril of tortures or of death."

Four of the accused only were sent to London, and examined by the king in person. In the end they were set at liberty, but not from the sagacity of the examiners,—the boy Robinson having confessed that he was suborned to give false evidence against them. One of these poor creatures, strange to say, had confessed the crime with which she was charged. In the Bodl. Lib. Dods. MSS., v. 61, p. 47, is the confession itself, wherein she gives a circumstantial and minute account of the transactions which took place between her and a familiar whom she calls Mamilian, describing the meetings, feasts, and all the usual routine of witchery and possession.—(See Whitaker's *Whalley*.)

PART FIRST

THE mill went merrily round, and Giles the miller sang and whistled from morning to noon, and from noon till evening, save when the mulcting-dish was about to be embowelled in the best sack; a business too serious for such levity, requiring careful and deliberate thought.

Goody Dickisson, the miller's wife, was a fat, round, pursy dame, of some forty years' travel through this wilderness of sorrow, and a decent, honest, sober, and well-conditioned housewife she was; cleanly, thrifty, and had an excellent cheese-press, which the whole neighbourhood could testify.

But the days of man's happiness are numbered, and woman's, too, as the following narrative will set forth.

The mill had stood, for ages it may be, at the foot of a wild and steep cliff, forming the eastern extremity of the dreary range of Cliviger*; an elevated mountainous pass, from whence the waters descend both to the eastern and western seas. Upon those almost inaccessible crags the rock-eagle and falcon built their nests, unscared by the herdsmen, who in vain attempted their destruction. Through this pass, the very gorge of the English Apennines, the Calder,† a rapid and narrow torrent, brought an unfailing supply of grist to the ever-going hopper of Giles Dickisson.

Not far from this happy abode in the innermost part of the gorge, where the rocks of Lancashire and Yorkshire frown in close but harmless proximity, at an immense height—the road and this narrow cleft only separating their barriers—rises a crag of a singular shape, jutting far out from the almost perpendicular strata beneath. Its form is precisely that of a gigantic helmet, hammered out by the fanciful artist into the likeness of an eagle, its wings partly outstretched, and

* Clẏꝼꝼıꝫꝼcẏꝑe, or *the rocky district.*

† Col-dwr, or *narrow water.* See Whitaker's etymology of the word (*Hist. of Manchester*).

its beak—the point of the crag—overshadowing the grim head of some gaunt warrior. With but little aid from the imagination, the whole features may be discerned; hence it was denominated, "*The Eagle Crag.*" But another appellation, more awful and mysterious, might be attached to it—a reminiscence of those "deeds without a name," which have rendered this district of Lancashire so fearfully notorious—"The witches' horse-block."

The narrow pass we have described opens out into a succession of picturesque valleys, abounding in water-falls of considerable depth and beauty, and expanding towards the north in tracts of fertile pasture-ground to the base of Pendle, well known as the reputed scene of those mysteries in which "the witches of Pendle" acted so conspicuous a part.

Towards the close of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century, the fame, or rather the infamy of witchcraft, infested this once peaceful and sequestered district. The crag we have just noticed was, no doubt, to the apprehensions of the simple-hearted peasant, oft visited by the unhallowed feet of weirds and witches pluming themselves for flight to the great rendezvous at Malkin Tower, by the side of "the mighty Pendle."

Little did our country deserve, in those days, the name of "Merry England." Plague or the most noisome pestilence would have been a visitation of mercy compared to the miseries caused by so dark a superstition. "Even he who lived remote from the scene of this spiritual warfare, though few such there could be, so rapidly was it transferred from county to county to the remotest districts;—he, in whose vicinity no one was suspected of dealing with the foul fiend, whose children, cattle, or neighbours showed no symptoms of being marks for those fiery darts which often struck from a distance, yet would he not escape a sort of epidemic gloom, a vague apprehension of the mischief

which might be. The atmosphere he breathed would come to him thick with foul fancies; he would ever be hearing or telling some wild and melancholy tale of crime and punishment. His best feelings and enjoyments would be dashed with bitterness, suspicion, and terror, as he reflected that, though uninvaded, yet these were at the mercy of malignant fellow-mortals, leagued with more malignant spirits, the laws and limits of whose operations were wholly undefinable.

"What must have been his feelings on whom the evil eye glared—against whom the spell had been pronounced; on whom had misfortunes come thick and fast, by flood and field, at home and abroad, in business and in pleasure; whose cattle died, whose crops were blighted, and about whose bed and board, invisible, unwelcome, and mischievous guests held their revels; who saw not in his calamities the results of ignorance and error, to be averted by caution, nor the inflictions of Heaven to be borne with resignation, but was the victim of a compact in which his disasters were part of the price paid by the powers of darkness for an immortal soul! He who pined in consumption supposed that his own waxen effigy was revolving and melting at the charmed fire; the changes of his sensations told him when wanton cruelty damped the flame, to waste it lingeringly, or roused it in the impatience of revenge: and when came those sharp and shooting pains, the hags were thrusting in their bodkins, and their laugh rang in his ears: they sat upon his breast asleep—he awoke gasping, and, as he started up, he saw them melting into air. Yet more miserable was the wight whom the fiends were commissioned bodily to possess;— with whose breathing frame an infernal substance was incorporate and almost identified;—whose thoughts were sufferings, and his words involuntary blasphemies. Can we wonder that all this was not borne passively;— that its authors were hunted out, even, if needful, by their own charms;—that suspicion grew into conviction,

and conviction demanded vengeance;—that it was deemed a duty to hold them up to public hatred, and drag them to the bar of public justice;—and that their blood was eagerly thirsted after, of which the shedding was often believed not merely a righteous retribution, but the only efficient relief for the sufferers?

"The notion of witchcraft was no innocent and romantic superstition, no scion of an elegant mythology, but was altogether vulgar, repulsive, bloody, and loathsome. It was a foul ulcer on the face of humanity. Other vagaries of the mind have been associated with lofty or with gentle feelings—they have belonged more to sportiveness than to criminality;—they are the poetry interspersed on the pages of the history of opinions;—they seem to be dreams of sleeping reason, and not the putrescence of its mouldering carcase: but this has no bright side, no redeeming quality whatever."*

The human body is not more liable to contagion than is that faculty of the mind which is called imagination. That many of the accused believed in their crime, we have sufficient evidence in their own voluntary confessions, as well as in the traditions handed down to us on this subject. Both knavery and delusion were at work, as the following incidents will abundantly manifest. They have been selected from a wide range of materials on this important topic, as illustrating the varied operations of the same delusion on different orders and grades of mind—the temptations warily suited to each disposition, all tending to the same crime, and ultimately to the same punishment.

Our lusty miller had no children: it was a secret source of grief and anxiety to his dame, and many an hour of repining and discontent was the consequence. Yet Giles Dickisson's song was none the heavier; and

* See an able article on this subject in the *Retrospective Review*, vol. v. part i.

if his wheel went merrily round, his spirits whirled with it, and danced and frolicked in the sunshine of good humour, like the spray and sparkle from his own mill-race. But a change was gathering on his wife's countenance : her grief grew sullen ; her aspect stern and forbidding :—some hidden purpose was maturing : she seldom spoke to her husband. When addressed, she seemed to arouse from a sort of stupor, unwillingly forcing a reply. " She is bewitched," thought Giles. He had his suspicions ; but he could not confidently point out the source of the mischief.

One evening, as Goody Dickisson was sitting alone, pondering and discontented, there came in one Mal Spencer, a dark and scowling hag, to whom Giles bore no good-will. He had beforetime forbidden his wife to hold any intercourse with this witch-woman, who was an object generally of suspicion and mistrust. If the " evil eye " can be supposed to inhabit a human frame, this old woman had an undisputed claim to its possession. This night, however, old Molly came hobbling in without further ceremony than a " Good e'en, thou Dickisson wife," and took her seat opposite the dame in the miller's own chair. " Aroynt thee, witch," should have been returned to such an ill-omened salute ; but the miller's wife was either unwilling or unable to utter this well-known preservative against the malice of the Evil Ones.

The horse-shoe had been taken down from the door, and the blessed herb, moly, was incautiously thrown aside ; neither had Goody Dickisson offered up the usual petition that evening, to be defended from the snares of the devil. Her discontent was too great, and she was in a fitter mood for murmuring than prayer.

Leaning her long thin chin upon a little crutch, and throwing her bleared eyes full upon the dame, old Molly abruptly exclaimed in a voice like the croaking of a raven :

"Thou hast asked for children, but they are denied thee. What said I to thee, Goody Dickisson, in the clough yonder, by the holly trunk of the oak? Rememberest thou, when thou saidest thou wouldst pawn thy body for the wish of thy soul?"

Dame Dickisson waxed pale, and her knees shook; but the hag went on.

"Worship the master I serve, and thou shalt have thy desire—ay and more!"

"More!—What meanest thou?"

"Come to the feast, as I have bidden thee. If thou lik st not the savour of our company, thou shalt depart, and without harm."

"But who shall give me a safe conduct that I come back, and harmless as I went? Once in your possession, methinks——"

"What!" shouted the beldame, with a look of dark and devilish malignity:—"the word of a prince! Shall Goody Dickisson, the miller's wife, hold it in distrust? Go, poor fool, and chew thy bitterness, and bake thy bannocks, and fret thy old husband until thy writhen flesh rot from thy bones, and thou gnawest them for malice and vexation. Is it not glorious to ride on the wind—to mount the stars—to kiss the moon through the dark rolling clouds, when the blast scatters them in its might? To ride unharmed on their huge peaks tipped with thunder? To be for ever young in desire and enjoyment, though old and haggard, and bent double with age and infirmities? To have our wish and our revenge—ay, and the bodies of our enemies wasting before our spells, like wax to the flame? But go, sneak and drivel, and mind thy meal and barley-cakes, and go childless to thy grave."

She rose as if to depart; but Goody Dickisson's evil destiny prevailed, and she promised to attend the feast, with this condition only, that no harm should befall her, nor force nor entreaty should be used to win her consent to join their confederacy. But she returned

not from that unhallowed assembly until body and soul were for ever under the dominion of the destroyer.

The mill went merrily on no more, and the miller's song was still. He looked a heavy and a doomed man. Strange suspicions haunted him. His wife's ill-humour he could have borne ; but her very laugh now made him tremble : it was as if the functions of mind and body were animated by a being distinct from herself. Her countenance showed not that her thoughts mingled in either mirth or misery, except at times, when terrible convulsions seemed to pass over like the sudden roll of the sea, tossed by some unseen and subterraneous tempest. The neighbours began to shun his dwelling. His presence was the signal for stolen looks and portentous whispers. To church his wife never came ; but the bench, her usual sitting-place, was deserted. At the church-doors, after sermon, when the price of grain, the weather, and other marketable commodities were discussed and settled, Giles was evidently an object of avoidance, and left to trudge home alone to his own cheerless and gloomy hearth.

Dick Hargreaves' only cow was bewitched. The most effectual and approved method of ascertaining under whose spell she laboured was as follows :

The next Friday, a pair of breeches was thrown over the cow's horns ; she was then driven from the shippen with a stout cudgel. The place to which she directed her flight was carefully watched, for there assuredly must dwell the witch. To the great horror and dismay of Giles Dickisson, the cow came bellowing down the lane, tail up, in great terror—telling, as plain as beast could speak, of her distress, until she came to a full pause, middle deep, in his own mill-dam. This was a direct confirmation to his suspicions ; but the following was a more undeniable proof, if need were, of his wife's dishonest confederacy with the powers of darkness.

One morning, ere his servant Robin had taken the grey mare from the stable, Giles awoke early, and found

his wife had not lain by his side. He had beforetime felt half roused in the night from a deep but uneasy slumber; but he was too heavy and bewildered to recollect himself, and sleep again overcame him ere he could satisfy his doubts. He had either dreamt, or fancied he had dreamt, that his wife was, at some seasons, away for a whole night together, and he was rendered insensible by her spells. This morning, however, he awoke before the usual time, probably from some failure in the charm, and he met her as she was ascending the stairs. Something like alarm or confusion was manifest. She had been to look after the cattle, she stammered out, scolding Robin for an idle lout to lie abed so long. The stable-door was open. With an aching heart he went in. The grey mare was in a bath of foam, panting and distressed, as though from some recent journey. Whilst pondering on this strange occurrence, Robin came in. His master taxed him with dishonesty. After much ado, he confessed that his mistress had many times of late borrowed the mare for a night, always returning before the good man awoke. Giles was too full of trouble to rate Robin as he deserved, contenting himself with many admonitions and instructions how to act in the next emergency.

Not many nights after, as Robin was late in the stable, his mistress came with the usual request, and her magic bridle in her hand.

"Now, good Robin, the cream is in the bowl, and the beer behind the spigot, and my good man is in bed."

"Whither away, mistress?" said Robin, diligently whisping down and soothing the mare, who trembled from head to foot when she heard her mistress's voice.

"For a journey, Robin. I have business at Colne; but I will not fail to come back again before sunrise."

"Ay, mistress, this is always your tale; but measter catched her in a woundy heat last time, and will not let her go."

" But, Robin, she shall be in the stable and dry two hours before my old churl gets up."

" But measter says she maunna go."

" Thou hast told him, then—and a murrain light on thee ! "

With eyes glistening like witch-fires, did the dame bestow her malison. Robin half repented his refusal; but he was stubborn, and his courage not easily shaken. Besides, he had bragged at the last Michaelmas feast that he cared not a rush for never a witch in the parish. He had an *Agnus Dei* in his bosom, and a leaf from the holy herb in his clogs ; and what recked he of spells and incantations ? Furthermore, he had a waistcoat of proof given to him by his grandmother.*

" Since thou hast denied me the mare, I'll take thee in her place."

Robin felt in his bosom for the *Agnus Dei* cake, but it was gone !—He had thrown off his waistcoat, too, for the work, and his clogs were lying under the rack. Before he could furnish himself with these counter-charms, Goody Dickisson threw the bridle upon him, using these portentous words :

> " Horse, horse, see thou be;
> And where I point thee carry me."

Swift as the rush of the wind, Robin felt their power. His nature changed : he grew more agile and capacious ; and without further ado, found Goody upon his back, and his own shanks at an ambling gallop on the high-

* " On Christmas daie at night, a threed must be sponne of flax, by a little virgine girl, in the name of the divell ; and it must be by her woven, and also wrought with the needle. On the breste or fore part thereof must be made, with needlework, two heads ; on the head of the right side must be a hat, and a long beard,—the left head must have on a crown, and it must be so horrible that it maie resemble Belzebub ; and on each side of the wastcote must be made a crosse."—*Discoverie of Witchcraft*, by Reginald Scott, 1584.

road to Pendle. He panted and grew weary, but she urged him on with an unsparing hand, lashing and spurring with all her might, until at last poor Robin, unused to such expedition, flagged and could scarcely crawl. But needs must when the witches drive. Rest and despite were denied, until, almost dead with toil and terror, he halted in one of the steep gullies of Pendle near to Malkin Tower.

It was an old grey-headed ruin, solitary and uninhabited. The cold October wind whistled through its joints and crannies;—the walls were studded with bright patches of moss and lichen;—darkness and desolation brooded over it, unbroken by aught but the cry of the moor-fowl and the stealthy prowl of the weasel and wild cat.

But this lonesome and time-hallowed ruin was now lit up as for some gay festival; lights were flickering through the crevices, and the coming of the guests, each mounted on her enchanted steed, was accompanied by loud and fiend-like acclamations. Shrieks and howlings were borne from afar upon the blast. Unhallowed words and unutterable curses came on the hollow wind. Forms of indescribable and abominable shape flitted through the troubled elements. Robin, trembling all over with fright and fatigue, was told by his mistress to graze where he could, while she went in to the feast:—"Make good use of thy time, for in two hours I shall mount thee back again."

This was poor sustenance for Robin's stomach—furze and heath were not at all to his mind, and he peeped about for a quiet resting-place. Here he was kicked and bitten by others of the herd; several of them were in the like pitiable condition with himself; but some were really of the brute kind, and these fared the best, and were better-mannered than most of their human companions. Often did our unfortunate hero wish himself in their place. Having little else to do, he was prompted by curiosity to approach the building, from

whence the loud din of mirth and revelry grated harshly on his ears. A long chink disclosed to him some part of the mysteries within. There sat on the floor a great company of witches, feasting and cramming with all their might. An elderly gentleman of a grave and respectable deportment, clad in black doublet and hosen, sat on a stone-heap at the head, from whence he dealt out the delicacies with due care and attention. This was a mortifying sight to a hungry stomach, and Robin's humanity yearned at the display. After the first emotions had a little subsided, he found himself at leisure to examine the faces of the opposite guests, and he recognized several dames of his acquaintance, feasting right merrily at the witches' board. Either his fears and "thick-coming fancies" deceived him, or, as he afterwards declared, he saw nearly the whole of the neighbourhood at the assembly.

Presently it seemed as if the first course were ended, and the floor cleared by invisible hands in a twinkling.

"Now pull," said the grave personage in black.

Many ropes hung from the roof. These the women began to pull furiously, when down came pies, puddings, milk, cream, and rare wines, which they caught in wooden bowls; likewise sweetmeats and all manner of dainties, which made Robin's mouth to water so at the sight that he could bear it no longer. Intending to groan, he involuntarily uttered a loud neigh, which so alarmed the company that the lights were extinguished, and the guests sallied out, each immediately bestriding her steed and setting forth at full gallop, save Goody Dickisson, who, in attempting to mount Robin, met with a sore mishap. Recollecting the charm which operated upon him, he gave his head a sudden fling: as good-luck would have it, the bridle became entangled about her neck. His speech now came again, and he cried out:

> "Mare, mare, see thou be;
> And where I point thee carry me."

Suddenly she was metamorphosed, and Robin in his turn bestrode the witch. He spared her not as will readily be imagined, until he had her safe in her own stable before break of day. Leaving her there with the bridle about her neck, he entered the house, hungry and jaded. Soon he heard Giles coming down-stairs in a great hurry :

" How now, sirrah ! " cried the incensed miller ; " did I not tell thee to forbid thy mistress the mare ? "

" Why, master," replied Robin, scratching his head, " and so I have—the beast hasna' been ridden sin' ye backed her on Friday."

" Thou art a lying hound to look me in the face and say so. Thy mistress hath been out again last night upon her old errands—I found it out when I awaked."

" And what's the matter of that ? " said Robin, with great alacrity. " You may go see, master, an' ye liken—the mare's as dry as our meal-tub, and as brisk as bottled ale."

Giles turned angrily away from him towards the stable, tightening a tough cudgel in his grasp, with which he intended to belabour the unfortunate hind on his return. Nor was he long absent—Robin had scarcely swallowed a mouthful of hot porridge when his master thus accosted him :

" Why, thou hob-thrust, no good can come where thy fingers are a-meddling ; there is another jade beside mine own tied to the rack, not worth a groat. Dost let thy neighbours lift my oats and provender ? Better turn my mill into a spital for horses, and nourish all the worn-out kibboes i' the parish ! "

" Nay, measter, the beast is yours ; and ye ha' foun' her bed and provender these twenty years."

" I'll cudgel that lying spirit out o' thee," said Giles, wetting his hands for a firm grasp at the stick.

" Hold, master ! " said Robin, stepping aside ; " she has cost you more currying than all the combs in the stable are worth. Step in and take off the bridle, and

then say whose beast she is, and who hath most right to her, you or your neighbours. But mind, when the bridle is off her neck, she slip it not on to yours; for if she do, you are a gone man."

Giles stayed not, but ran with great haste into the stable. The tired beast could scarcely stand; but he pulled off the bridle, and—as Robin told the tale—his own spouse immediately stood confessed before him!

Here we pause. In the next part we shall rapidly sketch another of the traditions current on this strange subject. It will but be a brief and shadowy outline: space forbids us to dilate: the whole volume would not contain the stories that tradition attributes to the prevalence of this unnatural and revolting, though, it may be, imaginary crime.

PART SECOND

On the verge of the Castle Clough, a deep and winding dingle, once shaded with venerable oaks, are the small remains of the Castle of Hapton, the seat of its ancient lords, and, till the erection of Hapton Tower, the occasional residence of the De la Leghs and Townleys. Hapton Tower is now destroyed to its foundation. It was a large square building, and about a hundred years ago presented the remains of three cylindrical towers with conical basements. It also appears to have had two principal entrances opposite to each other, with a thorough lobby between, and seems not to have been built in the usual form—that of a quadrangle. It was erected about the year 1510, and was inhabited until 1667. The family name of the nobleman—for such he appears to have been—of whom the following story is told, we have no means of ascertaining. That he was an occasional resident or visitor at the Tower is

but surmise. During the period of these dark transactions we find that the mansion was inhabited by Jane Assheton, relict of Richard Townley, who died in the year 1637. Whoever he might be, the following horrible event, arising out of this superstition, attaches to his memory. Whether it can be attributed to the operations of a mind just bordering on insanity, and highly wrought upon by existing delusions—or must be classed amongst the proofs, so abundantly furnished by all believers in the reality of witchcraft and demoniacal possession, our readers must determine as we unfold the tale.

Lord William had seen, and had openly vowed to win, the proud maiden of Bernshaw Tower. He did win her, but he did not woo her. A dark and appalling secret was connected with their union, which we shall briefly develop.

Lady Sibyl, "the proud maiden of Bernshaw," was from her youth the creature of impulse and imagination —a child of nature and romance. She roved unchecked through the green valleys and among the glens and moorlands of her native hills; every nook and streamlet was associated with some hidden thought "too deep for tears," until nature became her god—the hills and fastnesses, the trackless wilds and mountains, her companions. With them alone she held communion; and as she watched the soft shadows and the white clouds take their quiet path upon the hills, she beheld in them the symbols of her own ideas—the images and reflections—the hidden world within her made visible. She felt no sympathy with the realities—the commonplaces of life; her thoughts were too aspiring for earth, yet found not their resting-place in heaven! It was no grovelling, degrading superstition which actuated her: she sighed for powers above her species—she aspired to hold intercourse with beings of a superior nature. She would gaze for hours in wild delirium on the blue sky and starry vault, and wish she were freed from the

base encumbrances of earth, that she might shine out among those glorious intelligences in regions without a shadow or a cloud. Imagination was her solace and her curse; she flew to it for relief as the drunkard to his cup, sparkling and intoxicating for a while, but its dregs were bitterness and despair. Soon her world of imagination began to quicken; and, as the wind came sighing through her dark ringlets, or rustling over the dry grass and heather bushes at her side, she thought a spirit spoke, or a celestial messenger crossed her path. The unholy rites of the witches were familiar to her ear, but she spurned their vulgar and low ambition; she panted for communion with beings more exalted—demigods and immortals, of whom she had heard as having been translated to those happier skies, forming the glorious constellations she beheld. Sometimes fancies wild and horrible assaulted her; she then shut herself for days in her own chamber, and was heard as though in converse with invisible things. When freed from this hallucination, agony was marked on her brow, and her cheek was more than usually pale and collapsed. She would then wander forth again:—the mountain-breeze reanimated her spirits, and imagination again became pleasant unto her. She heard the wild swans winging their way above her, and she thought of the wild hunters and the spectre-horseman*: the short wail of the curlew, the call of the moor-cock and plover, was the voice of her beloved. To her all nature wore a charmed life: earth and sky were but creatures formed for her use, and the ministers of her pleasure.

The Tower of Bernshaw was a small fortified house in the pass over the hills from Burnley to Todmorden. It stood within a short distance from the Eagle Crag;

* In Lancashire these noises are called the Gabriel Ratchets, according to Webster, which seem to be the same with the German Rachtvogel or Rachtraven. The word and the superstition are still prevalent. Gabriel Ratchets are supposed to be like the sound of puppies yelping in the air, and to forebode death or misfortune.

and the Lady Sibyl would often climb to the utmost verge of that overhanging peak, looking from its dizzy height until her soul expanded, and her thoughts took their flight through those dim regions where the eye could not penetrate.

One evening she had lingered longer than usual: she felt unwilling to depart—to meet again the dull and wearisome realities of life—the petty cares that interest and animate mankind. She loathed her own form and her own species:—earth was too narrow for her desire, and she almost longed to burst its barriers. In the deep agony of her spirit she cried aloud:

"Would that my path, like yon clouds, were on the wind, and my dwelling-place in their bosom!"

A soft breeze came suddenly towards her, rustling the dry heath as it swept along. The grass bent beneath its footsteps, and it seemed to die away in articulate murmurs at her feet. Terror crept upon her, her bosom thrilled, and her whole frame was pervaded by some subtle and mysterious influence.

"Who art thou?" she whispered, as though to some invisible agent. She listened, but there was no reply; the same soft wind suddenly arose, and crept to her bosom.

"Who art thou?" she inquired again, but in a louder tone. The breeze again flapped its wings, mantling upwards from where it lay, as if nestled on her breast. It mounted lightly to her cheek, but it felt hot—almost scorching—when the maiden cried out as before. It fluttered on her ear, and she thought there came a whisper:

"I am thy good spirit."

"Oh, tell me," she cried with vehemence: "show me who thou art!"—a mist curled round her, and a lambent flame, like the soft lightning of a summer's night, shot from it. She saw a form, glorious but indistinct, and the flashes grew paler every moment.

"Leave me not," she cried; "I will be thine!"

Then the cloud passed away, and a being stood before her, mightier and more stately than the sons of men. A burning fillet was on his brow, and his eyes glowed with an ever-restless flame.

"Maiden, I come at thy wish. Speak!—what is thy desire?"

"Let thought be motion;—let my will only be the boundary of my power," said she, nothing daunted; for her mind had become too familiar with invisible fancies, and her ambition too boundless to feel either awe or alarm. Immediately she felt as though she were sweeping through the trackless air—she heard the rush of mighty wings cleaving the sky—she thought the whole world lay at her feet, and the kingdoms of the earth moved on like a mighty pageant. Then did the vision change. Objects began to waver and grow dim, as if passing through a mist; and she found herself again upon that lonely crag, and her conductor at her side. He grasped her hand; she felt his burning touch, and a sudden smart as though she were stung—a drop of blood hung on her finger. He unbound the burning fillet, and she saw as though it were a glimpse of that unquenchable, unconsuming flame that devoured him. He took the blood and wrote upon her brow. The agony was intense, and a faint shriek escaped her. He spoke, but the sound rang in her ears like the knell of hopes for ever departed.

For words of such presumptuous blasphemy, tradition must be voiceless. The demon looked upwards; but, as if blasted by some withering sight, his eyes were suddenly withdrawn.

. . . . . .

What homage was exacted, let no one seek to know.

After a pause, the deceiver again addressed her; and his form changed as he spoke.

"One day in the year alone thou shalt be subject to mischance. It is the feast of All-Hallows, when the witches meet to renew their vows. On this night thou

must be as they, and must join their company. Still thou mayest hide thyself under any form thou shalt choose; but it shall abide upon thee until midnight. Till then thy spells are powerless. On no other day shall harm befall thee."

The maiden felt her pride dilate:—her weak and common nature she thought was now no longer a degradation; she seemed as though she could bound through infinite space. Already was she invested with the attributes of immateriality, when she awoke!—and in her own chamber, whither the servants had conveyed her from the crag an hour before, having found her asleep, or in a swoon, upon the verge of the precipice. She looked at her hand; the sharp wound was there, and she felt her brow tingle as if to remind her of that irrevocable pledge.

Lord William sued in vain to the maid of Bernshaw Tower. She repulsed him with scorn and contumely. He vowed that he would win her, though the powers of darkness withstood the attempt. To accomplish this impious purpose, he sought Mause, the witch's dwelling. It was a dreary hut, built in a rocky cleft, shunned by all as the abode of wicked and malignant spirits, which the dame kept and nursed as familiars, for the fulfilment of her malicious will.

The night was dark and heavy when Lord William tied his steed to a rude gate that guarded the entrance to the witch's den. He raised the latch, but there was no light within.

"Holloa!" cried the courageous intruder; but all was dark and silent as before. Just as he was about to depart, he thought he heard a rustling near him, and presently the croaking voice of the hag close at his ear.

"Lord William," said she, "thou art a bold man to come hither after nightfall."

He felt something startled, but he swerved not from his purpose.

"Canst help me to a bride, Mother Helston?" cried he, in a firm voice; "for I feel mightily constrained to wed!"

"Is the doomed maiden of Bernshaw a bride fit for Lord William's bosom?" said the invisible sorceress.

"Give me some charm to win her consent—I care not for the rest."

"Charm!" replied the beldame, with a screech that made Lord William start back. "Spells have I none that can bind her. I would she were in my power; but she hath spell for spell. Naught would avail thee, for she is beyond my reach; her power would baffle mine."

"Is she, too, tainted with the iniquity that is abroad?"

"I tell thee yea; and my spirit must bow to hers. Wouldst wed her now—fond, feeble-hearted mortal?"

Lord William was silent; but the beautiful form of the maiden seemed to pass before him, and he loved her with such overmastering vehemence that if Satan himself had stood in the gap he would not have shrunk from his purpose.

"Mause Helston," said the lover, "if thou wilt help me at this bout, I will not draw back. I dare wed her though she were twice the thing thou fearest. Tell me how her spell works—I will countervail it—I will break that accursed charm, and she shall be my bride!"

For a while there was no reply; but he heard a muttering as though some consultation were going on.

"Listen, Lord William," she spoke aloud. "Ay, thou wilt listen to thine own jeopardy! Once in the year—'tis on the night of All-Hallows—she may be overcome. But it is a perilous attempt!"

"I care not. Point out the way, and I will ride it rough-shod!"

The beldame arose from her couch, and struck a light. Ere they separated, the morning dawned high above the grey hills. Many rites and incantations were

performed, of which we forbear the disgusting recital. The instructions he received were never divulged, the secrets of that night were never known; but an altered man was Lord William when he came back to Hapton Tower.

On All-Hallows' day, with a numerous train, he went forth a-hunting. His hounds were the fleetest from Calder to Calder; and his horns the shrillest through the wide forests of Accrington and Rossendale. But on that morning a strange hound joined the pack that outstripped them all.

"Blow," cried Lord William, "till the loud echoes ring, and the fleet hounds o'ertake yon grizzled mongrel."

Both horses and dogs were driven to their utmost speed, but the strange hound still kept ahead. Over moor and fell they still rushed on, the hounds in full cry, though as yet guided only by the scent, the object of their pursuit not being visible. Suddenly a white doe was seen, distant a few yards only, and bounding away from them at full speed. She might have risen out of the ground, so immediate was her appearance. On they went in full view, but the deer was swift, and she seemed to wind and double with great dexterity. Her bearing was evidently towards the steep crags on the east. They passed the Tower of Bernshaw, and were fast approaching the verge of that tremendous precipice, the "Eagle Crag." Horse and rider must inevitably perish if they follow. But Lord William slackened not in the pursuit; and the deer flew straight as an arrow to its mark—the very point where the crag jutted out over the gulf below. The huntsmen drew back in terror; the dogs were still in chase, though at some distance behind;—Lord William only and the strange hound were close upon her track. Beyond the crag nothing was visible but cloud and sky, showing the fearful height and abruptness of the descent. One moment, and the gulf must be shot:—his brain felt dizzy, but his heart was resolute.

"Mause, my wench," said he, "my neck or thine! —Hie thee; if she's over, we are lost!"

Lord William's steed followed in the hound's footsteps to a hair. The deer was almost within her last spring, when the hound, with a loud yell, doubled her, scarcely a yard's breadth from the long bare neb of that fearful peak, and she turned with inconceivable speed so near the verge that Lord William, in whirling round, heard a fragment of rock, loosened by the stroke from his horse's hoof, roll down the precipice with a frightful crash. The sudden whirl had nearly brought him to the ground, but he recovered his position with great adroitness. A loud shriek announced the capture. The cruel hound held the deer by the throat, and they were struggling together on the green earth. With threats and curses he lashed away the ferocious beast, who growled fiercely at being driven from her prey. With looks of sullenness and menace she scampered off, leaving Lord William to secure the victim. He drew a silken noose from his saddle-bow, and threw it over the panting deer, who followed quietly on to his dwelling at Hapton Tower.

At midnight there was heard a wild and unearthly shriek from the high turret, so pitiful and shrill that the inmates awoke in great alarm. The loud roar of the wind came on like a thunder-clap. The tempest flapped its wings, and its giant arms rocked the turret like a cradle. At this hour Lord William, with a wild and haggard eye, left his chamber. The last stroke of the midnight bell trembled on his ear as he entered the western tower. A maiden sat there; a silken noose was about her head, and she sobbed loud and heavily. She wrung her white hands at his approach.

"Thy spells have been o'ermastered. Henceforth I renounce these unholy rites; I would not pass nights of horror and days of dread any longer. Maiden, thou art in my power. Unless thou wilt be mine—renouncing thine impious vows—for ever shunning thy detested

arts—breaking that accursed chain the enemy has wound about thee—I will deliver thee up to thy tormentors, and those that seek thy destruction. This done, and thou art free."

The maiden threw her snake-like glance upon him.

"Alas!" she cried, "I am not free. This magic noose! remove it, and my promise shall be without constraint."

"Nay, thou arch-deceiver—deceiver of thine own self, and plotter of thine own ruin—I would save thee from thy doom. Promise, renounce, and for ever forswear thy vows. The priest will absolve thee; it must be done ere I unbind that chain."

"I promise," said the maiden, after a deep and unbroken silence. "I have not been happy since I knew their power. I may yet worship this fair earth and yon boundless sky. This heart would be void without an object and a possession!"

She shed no tear until the holy man, with awful and solemn denunciations, exorcised the unclean spirit to whom she was bound. He admonished her, as a repentant wanderer from the flock, to shun the perils of presumption, reminding her that HE, of whom it is written that He was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be *tempted* of the devil—HE who won for us the victory in that conflict, taught *us* in praying to say, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." She was rebaptized as one newly born, and committed again to the keeping of the Holy Church. Shortly afterwards were united at the altar Lord William and Lady Sibyl. He accompanied her to Bernshaw Tower, their future residence—becoming, in right of his wife, the sole possessor of those domains.

PART THIRD

TWELVE months were nigh come and gone, and the feast of All-Hallows was again at hand. Lord William's bride sat in her lonely bower, but her face was pale, and her eyes red with weeping. The tempter had been there; and she had not sought for protection against his snares. That night she was expected to renew her allegiance to the prince of darkness. Those fearful rites must now bind her for ever to his will. Such appeared to be her infatuation that it led her to imagine she was yet his by right of purchase, without being fully conscious of the impiety of that thought. His own power had been promised to her: true, she must die; but might she not, a spirit like himself, rove from world to world, without restraint? She thought—so perilously rapid was her relapse and her delusion—that his form had again passed before her, beautiful as before his transgression!—"The Son of the Morning!" arrayed in the majesty which he had before the world was—ere heaven's Ruler had hurled him from his throne. Her mental vision was perverted. Light and darkness, good and evil, were no longer distinguished. Perhaps it was a dream; but the imagination had become diseased, and she distinguished not its inward operations from outward impressions on the sense. Her husband was kind, and loved her with a lover's fondness, but she could not return his affection. He saw her unhappy, and he administered comfort; but the source of her misery was in himself, and she sighed to be free.

"Free!"—she started; the voice was an echo to her thought. It appeared to be in the chamber, but she saw no living form. She had vowed to renounce the devil and all his works in her rebaptism, before she was led to the altar, and how could she face her husband?

"He shall not know of our compact."

These words seemed to be whispered in her ear.

She turned aside, but saw nothing save the glow of sunset through the lattice, and a wavering light upon the floor.

"I would spare him this misery," she sighed. "Conceal but the secret from him, and I am again thine!"

Suddenly the well-known form of her familiar was at her side.

The following day was All-Hallows'-e'en, and her allegiance must be renewed in the great assembly of his subjects held on that fearful night.

It was in the year 1632, a period well known in history as having led to the apprehension of a considerable number of persons accused of witchcraft. The depositions of these miserable creatures were taken before Richard Shuttleworth and John Starkie, two of his Majesty's justices of the peace, on the 10th of February, 1633; and they were committed to Lancaster Castle for trial.

Seventeen of them were found guilty, on evidence suspicious enough under ordinary circumstances, but not at all to be wondered at, if we consider the feeling and excitement then abroad. Some of the deluded victims themselves confessed their crime, giving minute and connected statements of their meetings, and the transactions which then took place. Justices of the peace, judges, and the highest dignitaries of the realm, firmly believed in these reputed sorceries. Even the great Sir Thomas Browne, author of the book intended as an exposure of "Vulgar Errors," gave his testimony to the truth and reality of those diabolical delusions. But we have little need to wonder at the superstition of past ages, when we look at the folly and credulity of our own.

It may, perhaps, be pleasing to learn that the judge who presided at the trial respited the convicts, and reported their case to the king in council. They were next remitted to Chester, where Bishop Bridgeman, certifying his opinion of the matter, four of the accused

—Margaret Johnson, Frances Dickisson, Mary Spencer, and the wife of one Hargreaves—were sent to London and examined, first by the king's physicians, and afterwards by Charles I in person. "A stranger scene can scarcely be perceived," says the historian of Whalley; "and it is not easy to imagine whether the untaught manners, rude dialect, and uncouth appearance of these poor foresters, would more astonish the king; or his dignity of person and manners, together with the splendid scene by which they were surrounded, would overwhelm them."

The story made so much noise that plays were written on the subject, and enacted. One of them is entitled, "The late Lancashire Witches, a well-received Comedy, lately acted at the Globe on the Bank-side, by the King's Majesty's Actors. Written by Thomas Haywood and Richard Broom. *Aut prodesse solent aut delectare*, 1634."

But our element is tradition, especially as illustrating ancient manners and superstitions; we therefore give the sequel of our tale as tradition hath preserved it.

Giles Dickisson, the merry miller at the Mill Clough, had so taken to heart his wife's dishonesty that, as we have before observed, he grew fretful and morose. His mill, he vowed, was infested with a whole legion of these "hell-cats," as they were called; for in this shape they presented themselves to the affrighted eyes of the miserable yoke-fellow, as he fancied himself, to a limb of Satan. The yells and screeches he heard o' nights from these witches and warlocks were unbearable; and once or twice, when late at the mill, both he and Robin had received some palpable tokens of their presence. Scratches and bloody marks were plainly visible, and every hour brought with it some new source of annoyance or alarm.

One morning Giles showed himself with a disconsolate face before Lord William at the Tower; he could bear his condition no longer.

"T'other night," said he, "the witches set me astride o' t' riggin' o' my own house.* It was a bitter cold time, an' I was nearly perished when I wakened. I am weary of my life, and will flit; for this country, the deil, I do think, holds in his own special keeping!"

Then Robin stept forward, offering to take the mill on his master's quittance. He cared not, he said, for all the witch-women in the parish. He had "fettled" one of them, and, by his Maker's help, he hoped fairly to drive them off the field. The bargain was struck, and Robin that day entered into possession.

By a strange coincidence, this transaction happened on the eve of All-Hallows before mentioned; and Lord William requested that Robin would on that night keep watch. His courage, he said, would help him through; and if he could rid the mill of them, the Baron promised him a year's rent, and a good largess besides. Robin was fain of the offer, and prepared himself for the strife, determined, if possible, to eject these ugly vermin from the premises.

On this same night, soon after sunset, the lady of Bernshaw Tower went forth, leaving her lord in a deep sleep, the effect, as it was supposed, of her own spells. Ere she departed, every symbol or token of grace was laid aside: her rosary was unbound. She drew a glove from her hand, and in it was the bridle reign, which she threw from her—when the flame of the lamp suddenly expired. It was in her little toilet-chamber, where she had paused, that she might pursue her meditations undisturbed. Her allegiance must be renewed, and revoked no more; but her pride, that darling sin

* "Riggin'" or ridging. The hills which divide the counties of York and Lancaster are sometimes called "th' riggin'," from their being the highest land between the two seas, forming part of what is called the backbone of England. An individual residing at a place named "The Summit," from its situation, was asked where he lived. "I live at th' riggin' o' th' warld, I reckon," says he; "for th' water fro' t' one side o' th' roof fa's to th' east sea, an' t' other to th' west sea."

for which she raised her soul, must first suffer. On that night she must be guided by the same laws, and subjected to the same degrading influence, as her fellow-subjects. At least once a year this condition must be fulfilled :—all rank and distinction being lost, the vassals were alike equal in subordination to their chief. On this night, too, the rites of initiation were usually administered.

The time drew nigh, and the Lady Sibyl, intending to conceal the glove with the sacred symbol, passed her hand on the table where it had lain—but it was gone !

. . . . . .

In a vast hollow, nearly surrounded by crags and precipices, bare and inaccessible, the meeting was assembled, and the lady of the Tower was to be restored to their communion. Gliding like a shadow, came in the wife of Lord William—pale and her tresses dishevelled, she seemed the victim either of disease or insanity.

Under a tottering and blasted pine sat their chief, in a human form ; his stature lofty and commanding, he appeared as a ruler even in this narrow sphere of his dominion. Yet he looked round with a glance of mockery and scorn. He was fallen, and he felt degraded, but his aim was to mar the glorious image of his Maker, and trample it beneath his feet.

A crowd of miserable and deluded beings came at the beck of their chief, each accompanied by her familiar. But the lady of Bernshaw came alone. Her act of renouncement had deprived her of this privilege.

The mandate having been proclaimed, and the preliminary rites to this fearful act of reprobation performed, the assembly waited for the concluding act—the cruel and appalling trial : one touch of his finger was to pass upon her brow—the impress, the mark of the beast—the sign that was to snatch her from the reach of mercy !

Her spirit shuddered ;—nature shrank from the unholy contact. Once more she looked towards that heaven she was about to forfeit—and for ever !

" For ever ! "—the words rang in her ears ; their sound was like the knell of her everlasting hope. She started aside, as though she felt a horrid and scorching breath upon her cheek, as though she already felt their unutterable import in the abysses of woe !

Conscience, long slumbering, seemed to awake ; she was seized with the anguish of despair ! It seemed as though judgment were passed, and she was doomed to wander like some rayless orb in the blackness of darkness for ever. One fearful undefined form of terror was before her ; one consciousness of offence ever present ; all idea of past and future absorbed in one everduring NOW, she felt that her misery was too heavy to sustain. A groan escaped her lips, but it was an appeal to that power for deliverance, who is not slow to hear, " nor impotent to save." Suddenly she was roused from some deep and overpowering hallucination ; the promises of unlimited gratification to every wish prevailed no more, the tempter's charm was broken. All was changed ; the whole scene seemed to vanish ; and that form, which once appeared to her like an angel of light, fell prostrate, writhing away in terrific and tortuous folds on the hissing earth. The crowd scattered with a fearful yell ;—she heard a rush of wings, and a loud and dissonant scream,—and the " Bride of Bernshaw " fell senseless to the ground.

We leave the conscience-stricken victim whilst we relate the result of Robin's watch-night at the mill.

He lay awake until midnight, but there was no disturbance ; nothing was heard but the plash of the mill-stream, and the dripping ooze from the rocks. His old enemies, no doubt, were intimidated, and he was about commencing a snug nap on the idea—when, lo ! there came a great rush of wind. He heard it booming on from a vast distance, until it seemed to sweep over

the building in one wide, resistless torrent that might have levelled the stoutest edifice ;—yet was the mill unharmed by the attack. Then came shrieks and yells, mingled with the most horrid imprecations. Swift as thought, there rushed upon him a prodigious company of cats, bats, and all manner of hideous things, that scratched and pinched him, as he afterwards declared, until his flesh verily "reeked" again. Maddened by the torment, he began to lay about him lustily with a long whittle which he carried for domestic purposes. They gave back at so unexpected a reception. Taking courage thereby, Robin followed, and they fled, helter-skelter, like a routed army. Through loop-holes and windows went the obscene crew, with such hideous screeches as startled the whole neighbourhood. He gave one last desperate lunge as a parting remembrance, and felt that his weapon had made a hit. Something fell on the floor, but the light was extinguished in the scuffle, and in vain he attempted to grope out this trophy of his valour.

"I've sliced off a leg or a wing," thought he, "and I may lay hold on it in the morning."

All was now quiet, and Robin, to his great comfort, was left without further molestation.

Morning dawned bright and cheerful on the grey battlements of Bernshaw Tower ; the sun came out joyously over the hills ; but Lord William walked forth with an anxious and gloomy countenance. His wife had feigned illness, and the old nurse had tended her through the night in a separate chamber. This was the story he had learnt on finding her absent when he awoke. Early presenting himself at the door, he was refused admission. She was ill—very ill. The lady was fallen asleep, and might not be disturbed : such was the answer he received. Rising over the hill, he now saw the gaunt ungainly form of Robin, his new tenant, approaching in great haste with a bundle under his arm.

"What news from the mill, my stout warrior of the north?" said Lord William.

"I think I payed one on 'em, your worship," said Robin, taking the bundle in his hand. "Not a cat said mew when they felt my whittle. Marry, I spoilt their catterwauling: I've cut a rare shive!"

"How didst fare last night with thy wenches?" inquired the other.

"I've mended their manners for a while, I guess. As I peeped about betimes this morning, I found—a paw! If cats are bred with hands and gowden rings on their fingers, they shall e'en ha' sporting-room i' the mill! No bad luck, methinks."

Robin uncovered the prize, and drew out a bleeding hand, mangled at the wrist, and blackened as if by fire; one finger decorated with a ring, which Lord William too plainly recognized. He seized the terrific pledge, and, with a look betokening some deadly purpose, hastened to his wife's chamber. He demanded admittance in too peremptory a tone for denial. His features were still, not a ripple marked the disturbance beneath. He stood with a calm and tranquil brow by her bedside; but she read a fearful message in his eye.

"Fair lady, how farest thou?—I do fear me thou art ill!"

"She's sick, and in great danger. You may not disturb her, my lord," said the nurse, attempting to prevent his too near approach;—"I pray you depart; your presence afflicts her sorely."

"Ay, and so it does," said Lord William, with a strange and hideous laugh. "I pray thee, lady, let me play the doctor,—hold out thy hand."

The lady was still silent. She turned away her head. His glance was too withering to endure.

"Nay, then, I must constrain thee, dame."

She drew out her hand, which Lord William seized with a violent and convulsive grasp.

"I fear me 'tis a sickness unto death; small hope of

amendment here. Give me the other; perchance I may find there more comfort."

"Oh, my husband, I cannot;—I am—I have no strength."

"Why, thou art grown peevish with thy distemper. Since 'tis so, I must e'en force thy stubborn will."

"Alas! I cannot."

"If not thy hand, show me thy wrist!—I have here a match to it, methinks. O earth—earth—hide me in thy womb!—let the darkness blot me out and this blasting testimony for ever!—Accursed hag, what hast thou done?"

He seized her by the hair.

"What hast thou promised the fiend? Tell me—or——"

"I have—oh, I fear I have—consented to the compact!"

"How far doth it bind thee?"

"My soul—my better part!"

"Thy better part?—thy worse! A loathsome ulcer reeking with the stench from the pit! Better have given thy body to the stake, than have let in one unhallowed desire upon thy soul. How far does thy contract reach?"

"All interest I can claim. His part that created it I could not give, not being mine to yield."

"Lost! lost! Thou hast, indeed, sold thyself to perdition! I'll purge this earth of witchery;—I'll make their carcases my weapon's sheath;—hence inglorious scabbard!" He flung away the sheath. Twining her dark hair about his fingers—"Die!—impious, polluted wretch! This blessed earth loathes thee—the grave's holy sanctuary will cast thee out! Yon glorious sun would smite thee should I refrain!"

He raised his sword—a gleam of triumph seemed to flash from her eye, as though she were eager for the blow; but the descending weapon was stayed, and by no timid hand.

Lord William turned, yet he saw not the cause of its restraint. The lady alone seemed to be aware of some unseen intruder, and her eye darkened with apprehension. Suddenly she sprang from the couch; a shriek from no human agency escaped her, and the spirit seemed to have passed from its abode.

Lord William threw himself on her pale and inanimate form.

"Farewell!" he cried: "I had thought thee honest! —Nay, lost spirit, I must not say farewell!"

He gazed on his once-loved bride with a look of such unutterable tenderness that the heart's deep gush burst from his eyes, and he wept in that almost unendurable anguish. The sight was too harrowing to sustain. He was about to withdraw, when a convulsive tremor passed across her features—a trembling like the undulation of the breeze rippling the smooth bosom of the lake; a sigh seemed to labour heavily from her breast; her eyes opened; but as though yet struggling under the influence of some terrific dream, she cried:

"Oh, save me—save me!" She looked upwards: it was as if the light of heaven had suddenly shone in upon her benighted soul.

"Lost, saidst thou, accursed fiend?—Never, until his power shall yield to thine!"

Yet she shuddered, as though the appalling shadow were still upon her spirit.—"Nay, 'twas but a dream."

"Dreams!" cried Lord William, recovering from a look of speechless amazement. "Thy dreams are more akin to truth than ever were thy waking reveries."

"Nay, my Lord, look not so unkindly on me—I will tell thee all. I dreamt that I was possessed, and this body was the dwelling of a demon. It was permitted as a punishment for my transgressions; for I had taught communion with the fiend. I was the companion of witches—foul and abominable shapes;—a beastly crew, with whom I was doomed to associate. Hellish rites and deeds, too horrible to name, were perpetrated.

As a witness of my degradation, methought my right hand was withered. I feel it still! Yet—surely 'twas a dream!"

She raised her hand, gazing earnestly on it, which, to Lord William's amazement, appeared whole as before, save a slight mark round the wrist, but the ring was not there.

"What can this betide?" said the trembling sufferer. She looked suspiciously on this apparent confirmation of her guilt, and then upon her husband. "Oh, tell me that I did but dream!"

But Lord William spoke not.

"I know it all now!" she said, with a heavy sob. "My crime is punished; and I loathe my own form, for it is polluted. Yet the whole has passed but as some horrible dream—and I am free! This tabernacle is cleansed; no more shall it be defiled; for to Thee do I render up my trust."

A mild radiance had displaced the wild and unnatural lustre of her eye, as she looked up to the mercy she invoked, and was forgiven.

Her spirit was permitted but a brief sojourn in this region of sorrow. Ere another sun, her head hung lifeless on Lord William's bosom;—he had pressed her to his heart in token of forgiveness; but he held only the cold and clammy shrine—the idol had departed!

According to the popular solution of this fearful mystery, a demon or familiar had reanimated her form while she lay senseless at the sudden and unlooked-for dissolution of the witches' assembly. In this shape the imp had joined the rendezvous at the mill, and fleeing from the effects of Robin's valour, maliciously hoped that Lord William would execute a swift vengeance on his erring bride. But his hand was stayed by another and more merciful power, and the demon was cast out.

The ring and glove were not found. It was said that Mause Helston had taken them as a gage of fealty, and,

dying about the same period, was denied the rites of Christian burial. Hence may have arisen the belief which tradition has preserved respecting the Lady Sibyl.

Popular superstition still alleges that her grave was dug where the dark "Eagle Crag" shoots out its cold bare peak into the sky. Often, it is said, on the eve of All-Hallows, do the hound and the milk-white doe meet on the crag—a spectre huntsman in full chase. The belated peasant crosses himself at the sound as he remembers the fate of "THE WITCH OF BERNSHAW TOWER."

SIEGE OF LATHOM

" Let me no longer live, she sayd,
Than to my lord I true remain ;
My honour shall not be betray'd
Until I see my love again.

. . . .

" Oh ! blame her not if she was glad
When she her lord again had seen,
Thrice welcome home, my dear, she said,—
A long time absent thou hast been ;
The wars shall never more deprive
Me of my lord whilst I'm alive."

Mirrour for Married Women.

No authentic drawing or representation of Lathom House, we believe, exists, The author has, however, had the temerity to present a restoration of this renowned edifice, as it appeared before the siege, and before " the sequestrators under Cromwell, weary of the slow disposal of the building materials by sale, invited the peasants of the hundred of West Derby to take away the stones and timbers without any charge."

The very numerous documents to which he has had recourse were aided by measurements, and a visit to the spot, where he found that a tolerably accurate idea might be formed of the situation and extent of the walls and towers, together with the main entrance and the "great Eagle Tower."

The accompanying view is taken from a hill above the valley or trench, where, it is said, the main army of the besiegers was encamped. It is called in the neighbourhood " Cromwell's Trench," and as the old ballad expresses it, would hold " two kinges, their traines and all." Henry the Seventh, two years after his visit to Lathom,

restored his palace at Richmond, the same authority tells us, "like Lathom Hall in fashion." The gate-house according to the description of a carving of the Stanley legend in Manchester Collegiate Church, executed in the time of James Stanley, Bishop of Ely, appears to have had two octagonal turrets on each side of an obtusely-pointed or circular archway with battlements, machicolated and pierced for cannon.

The Eagle Tower alone remained when part of the estate was transferred to John Lord Ashburnham, on his marriage, in 1714, with Henrietta, daughter of William ninth Earl of Derby. Lord Ashburnham sold it to a Furness, and he to Sir Thomas Bootle. Not a vestige now exists, and even the records of the family are destroyed. "Golforden," says Mr. Heywood, in his interesting *Notes to a Journal of the Siege of Lathom*, "along whose banks knights and ladies have a thousand times made resort, hearkening to stories as varied as those of Boccaccio; the maudlin well, where the pilgrim and the lazar devoutly cooled their parched lips;—the mewing-house,—the training round,—every appendage to antique baronial state,—all now are changed, and a modern mansion and a new possessor fill the place."

THIS memorable siege, and the heroic defence by Lady Derby, though among the most prominent topics in the history of the county, supply but few materials which may not be found in records that already exist. Yet there are incidents connected with them which the historian has left unrecorded; occurrences, it might be, too trivial or too apocryphal for his pen. One of the main events in the following narrative, though not found amongst written and authenticated records, the author has listened to when a child, with a vigorous and greedy appetite for wonder—one of the earliest and most delightful exercises of the imagination.

We purpose to follow briefly the order of events as they appear in the several narratives to which we have had access, interweaving such traditionary matter as

we have gathered in our researches, thereby interrupting and relieving the tediousness of this "thrice-told tale."

Lord Derby, from the usual unhappy fatality, or rather from the indecision and jealousies prevailing in his Majesty's councils, had been commanded to leave the realm, and proceed instantly to the Isle of Man, at the precise time when his presence here would have been the most serviceable, not only from his great zeal, activity, and loyalty to his sovereign, but by reason of the influence he possessed, and the example which his noble and valiant bearing had shown throughout the county. His house, children, and all other temporal concerns, he left to the care of his lady, first making provision, secretly, for their defence, supplying her with men, money, and ammunition, that she might not be unprepared in case of attack. His lordship's opinion of this disastrous and impolitic removal may be gathered from the following hasty expressions. After a perusal of the despatches, announcing the king's, or rather the queen's, pleasure that he should speedily repair to the Isle of Man, where an invasion was apprehended from the Scots—speaking to the Lady Derby with more than ordinary quickness, he said, "My heart, my enemies have now their will, having prevailed with his Majesty to order me to the Isle of Man, as a softer banishment from his presence and their malice."

This valiant and high-born dame was daughter to Claude, Duke of Tremouille, and Charlotte Brabantin de Nassau, daughter of William, Prince of Orange, and Charlotte de Bourbon, of the royal house of France. By this marriage the Earl of Derby was allied to the French kings, the Dukes of Anjou, the Kings of Naples and Sicily, the Kings of Spain, and many other of the sovereign princes of Europe. Her father was a staunch Huguenot, and a trusty follower of Henry IV. That she did not sully the renown acquired by so illustrious a descent, the following narrative will abundantly prove.

It was a special council of the Holy States,* held at Manchester on Saturday the 24th of February, 1644, that, after many former debates and consultations, the siege of Lathom was concluded upon. The parliament troops under Colonel Ashton of Middleton, Colonel Moore of Bank-Hall, and Colonel Rigby of Preston, on the same day began their march, proceeding by way of Bolton, Wigan, and Standish, under a pretence of going into Westmoreland, that the soldiers should not presently know of their destination.

Lathom, for magnificence and hospitality, was held in high reputation, assuming, in these respects, the attitude of a royal court in the northern parts of the kingdom; and the family were regarded with such veneration and esteem that the following harmless inversion was familiar "as household words":—"God save the Earl of Derby and the King"; the general feeling and opinion thereby apparent being love to their lord and loyalty to their prince.

On the 27th of February the enemy took up their quarters about a mile distant from the house. The next day Captain Markland was the bearer of a letter to her ladyship from Sir Thomas Fairfax, commander-in-chief of the parliamentary forces, and likewise an ordinance of parliament: the one requiring that she should surrender the house upon such honourable terms as he might propose; and the other setting forth and commending the great mercy they had manifested by thus offering to receive the Earl of Derby if he would submit himself. But she indignantly refused to surrender without the consent and commandment of her lord, and after many interviews, to which she assented only to gain time, and to complete the provisioning and fortifying of her little garrison, they began to find her answers too full of policy and procrastination, dan-

* The name assumed by a body of men who met, during the wars, in Manchester, and who in energy and power were second only to their London brethren.

gerous to the fidelity of their troops. In the end, seeing she was only amusing them by vain pretences, they sent the following as their final terms, by Colonel Morgan, commander of the engineers, who had been appointed by Sir Thomas Fairfax to conduct the siege :

1st. " That the Countess of Derby shall have the time she desires, and then liberty to transport her arms and goods to the Isle of Man, except the cannon, which shall continue there for the defence of the house.

2d. " That her ladyship, by ten o'clock on the morrow, shall disband all her soldiers, except her menial servants, and receive an officer and forty parliament soldiers for her guard."

Morgan is described as " a little man short and peremptory, who met with staidness to coole his heat ; and had the honour to carry backe this last answer—for her ladyshipp could scrue them to noe more delayes, viz.—

" That she refused all their articles, and was truely happy they had refused hers, protesting shee had rather hazard her life than offer the like again ;—

" That though a woman, and a stranger, divorced from her friends, and rob'd of her estate, she was ready to receive their utmost violence, trusting in God both for protection and deliverance."

The next morning they discovered the enemy had been at work about a musket-shot from the house, in a sloping ground, where they appeared to be forming a breast-work and trench to protect the pioneers—multitudes of country people being every day forced into this laborious service.

The situation of Lathom deserves some notice, it being admirably calculated to resist any attack.

" It was encompassed by a strong wall, two yards thick ; upon the walls were nine towers, flanking each other, and in every tower six pieces of ordnance, that played three one way and three another. Upon the tops of these towers were placed the best and choicest

marksmen, who usually attended the Earl in his sports, as huntsmen, keepers, fowlers, and the like, who continually kept watch, with screwed guns and long fowling-pieces, to the great annoyance and loss of the enemy, especially of their commanders, who were frequently killed in the trenches. Without the wall was a moat eight yards wide and two yards deep; between the wall and the moat was a strong row of palisadoes. A high tower, called the Eagle Tower, stood in the midst, surmounting all the rest. The gate-house had a strong tower on each side, forming the entrance to the first court."

The site of the house seemed to have been formed for a stronghold, or place of safety: thus described by Seacome:

"Before the house, to the south and south-west, is a rising ground, so near as to overlook the top of it, from which it falls so quick, that nothing planted against it on those sides can touch it further than the front wall; and on the north and east sides there is another rising ground, even to the edge of the moat." "The situation of it may be compared to the palm of a man's hand, flat in the middle, and covered with a rising ground, about it, and so near to it, that the enemy, in two years' siege, were never able to raise a battery against it, so as to make a breach in the wall practicable to enter the house by way of storm."*

It is said the camp of the besiegers was in a woody dell, near what is now called "The Round O Quarry," about half a mile from Lathom. This dell is still called "Cromwell's Trench"; and a large and remarkable stone, having two circular hollows or holes on its upper surface, evidently once containing nodules of iron, is called "Cromwell's Stone"—the country people supposing these holes were used as moulds for casting balls during the siege.

* "Hist. of the House of Stanley," p. 90.

The besiegers, however, thought to reduce the place by famine, being deceived through the following device of her ladyship's chaplain, the Rev. Mr. Rutter, a person whom the Earl had left to her assistance, that she might be guided by his great skill and prudence :

During one of the conferences before-named, a captain of the parliamentary forces, recognizing in the chaplain an old friend, with whom he had been educated, and very intimate and familiar aforetime, took a secret opportunity of addressing him, hoping to worm out her ladyship's secrets ; conjuring him, by reason of their former friendship, to tell truly upon what ground or confidence she still refused these offers, seeing that it was impossible to defend her house against such a numerous and well-furnished army as was then encamped in the park.

Rutter, casting his eyes earnestly towards the ramparts, bade his friend note their disposition and defence. Her ladyship, as commander-in-chief, to prevent any sudden assault, and likewise to awe the enemy by these demonstrations, had disposed her soldiers in due order, so that they should be seen, under their respective officers, from the main-guard in the first court down to the great hall, where they had left her ladyship's council. The rest of her forces, she had placed upon the walls, and on the tops of the towers, in such manner that they might appear both numerous and well-disciplined.

" She is nothing so desirous," said Rutter, " as that you should waste your strength and forces by a sudden assault, wherein you would not fail to have the worst of the battle : the place being armed at all points, as thou seest, and able to withstand any attack but that of famine."

A promise of secrecy was exacted, when the wary chaplain pretended to unfold her ladyship's plans. He said there was but little provision in the place—that she was oppressed with the number of her soldiers—

that she would not be able to subsist more than fourteen days ; and she hoped to dare them to a sudden onset, not from her own confidence to give them a repulse, but knowing that, should they continue the siege, she must inevitably be forced to surrender.

The captain, after embracing his friend, and promising faithfully to maintain the secret, revealed, as Rutter intended he should, the whole of his confidential story to the enemy's council ; who, giving credit to the tale, laid aside, for the present, all thoughts of an attack, and resolved to invest the place in a close and formal siege.

Fourteen days being expired, and they, supposing her provisions were nigh spent, and the garrison reduced to the last extremity, sent another and more peremptory summons. But during this time her soldiers were training, the walls and fortifications were undergoing a thorough repair, and the cannon properly served and mounted. The fortress, too, was well stocked, and even abundantly stored, with provisions, in spite of their enemies, who kept a strict watch, but failed to detect the source and manner of the supply. She was not without hope, too, of relief from the king's troops, whom she daily expected to her assistance.

The besiegers finding themselves deceived, their confidence abused, and their schemes only serving to the advantage of the opposite party, orders were given and preparations made for more offensive measures, by drawing a line of circumvallation round the house.

The garrison consisted of 300 men, commanded by the Captains Henry Ogle, Edward Chisnall, Edward Rawsthorne, William Farmer, Mullineux Ratcliffe, and Richard Fox, assisted in their consultations by William Farrington of Werden, Esq., who, for executing the commission of array, and attending her ladyship in these troubles, had suffered the seizure of all his personal estate and the sequestration of his lands.

There were 150 men each night upon the watch, with

the exception of sixteen select marksmen out of the whole who all day kept the towers.

The besiegers' army was between two and three thousand, divided into tertias of seven or eight hundred men, who watched every third day and night. They were commanded by Colonels Egerton, Ashton, Holland, Rigby, Moore and Morgan, with their captains and lieutenants.

After many warlike demonstrations, by which they hoped to intimidate the garrison, and after some days spent in fruitless endeavours to bring her ladyship, as they said, to a due sense of her condition, they sent one Captain Ashurt, "a fair and civil gentleman, of good character," with fresh proposals. But Lady Derby, justly considering these frequent treaties and debates were a discouragement to her men, implying weakness and a want of confidence in her resources, replied sharply:

"That no one should quit the house, but that she would keep it, whilst God enabled her, against all the king's enemies; that, in brief, she would receive no more messages, but referred them to her lord, scorning their malice, and defying their assaults."

As the sequel of a business often depends upon the manner of its beginning, to second and confirm this answer the next morning she ordered a sally, when Captain Farmer with one hundred foot and Lieutenant Kay with twelve horse, their whole cavalry, went forth at different gates. Captain Farmer, determining to take them by surprise, marched up to the enemy's works without firing a shot; then pouncing upon them suddenly in their trenches, he ordered a close and well-aimed volley, which quickly made them leave their holes in great disorder. Immediately Lieutenant Kay, wheeling round with his horse, took them in flank, doing great execution as they fled. There were slain of the enemy about thirty men. The spoil was forty muskets, one drum, and six prisoners.

The retreat of this little band was skilfully secured by Captain Ogle and Captain Rawsthorne, so that not one of the assailants was either slain or wounded.

The besiegers were much annoyed with devices, ingeniously contrived by the garrison to intimidate them, and hinder and injure their work. Hitherto they had not been able to cast up a mound for their ordnance, so harassed and occupied were they with these incessant alarms. But Rigby, on whom devolved the plan and conduct of the siege, seeing that their affairs were in no thriving condition, but that rather they were the scoff and jest of the garrison, who daily taunted them from the walls, determined at all hazards to raise his cannon. For this purpose a considerable number of the peasantry and poorer sort in the neighbourhood, and for miles round, were driven like beasts to their daily work, labouring unremittingly at the mounds and trenches. At first they were sheltered by baskets and hurdles, afterwards by a testudo, or wooden house running upon wheels and roofed with thick planks. Still, many lives were lost in this desperate service. In the end they brought up one piece of cannon, amusing themselves like schoolboys at a holiday, in practising their harmless reports. The first shot struck the outer wall, but it was found proof. Afterwards they aimed higher, intending to beat down a pinnacle or turret, but this also passed without damage. The last shot, which missed entirely, went over and beyond the buildings, burrowing in a field on the other side.

When they had performed this mighty feat they sounded another parley, having, as they supposed, mightily beat down the hearts of the besieged. Colonel Rigby's chaplain then appeared at the gate with a letter that Sir Thomas Fairfax had received from Lord Derby, who was now at Chester, on his return from the Isle of Man. In this epistle he desired a free and honourable passage for his lady and their children, if she so pleased, being unwilling, as he said, to expose

them to the uncertain hazard of a long siege. His lordship knew not, by reason of his long absence, either how his house was provided with ammunition and sustenance, or in what condition it might be to withstand the attack. He was desirous that the garrison alone should bear the brunt, and that a defenceless woman and her children should be rescued from captivity.

Her ladyship replied that she would communicate with the earl, and if he should then continue in the same opinion, she would willingly submit to his commands; but until this, she would neither yield up the house nor abate in her hostility, but would abide by the result. Immediately she dispatched to his lordship a messenger, conveying him from the house by a well-executed sally. The attempt succeeded; but whether he was suffered to reach his destination or not we have no means of ascertaining. No answer was returned, though some days had elapsed, during which the enemy made many fruitless attempts to batter the walls.

They had now mounted the whole of their artillery, including their great mortar-piece, at that period looked upon as a most destructive engine, casting stones thirteen inches in diameter and eighty pounds weight; likewise grenadoes—hollow balls of iron, filled with powder and lighted by a fuse. These were dangerous intruders, calculated to produce great alarm and annoyance, as we shall find in the sequel. The mortar was planted only about half a musket-shot from the walls, south-west, on a rising ground, from whence the engineer commanded a view of the whole buildings.

The work on which it stood was orbicular, with a rampart of two yards and a half broad about the ditch. To lessen the destructive effects of this dangerous piece of artillery, chosen men were set as guards with wet hides and woollen coverlids to quench the flame, had the enemy been skilful enough to accomplish their purpose; it being their general opinion that to burn the house would be the most effectual means of subduing and driv-

ing out the garrison. But finding their endeavours met with no prosperous return, they bethought them to cast a show of religion over these attempts at robbery and rapine, issuing out commands to all men well affected towards their success, to co-operate with them for the overthrow of the "Babylonish harlot," by which term some worthy disciples of the visible church scrupled not to call the Lady of Lathom.*

The following proclamation was sent forth from their headquarters at Ormskirk:

"To all ministers and parsons in Lancashire, well-wishers to our successe against the Lathom House, these :—

"Forasmuch as more than ordinary obstrucc'ons have from the beginning of this p'sent service ag^t Lathom House interposed our proceedings, and yet still remaine, which cannot otherwise be removed, nor our successe furthered, onely by devine assistance; it is, therefore, our desires to the ministers and other well-affected persons of this county of Lancaster, in publike manner, as they shall please, to com'end our case to God, that as wee are appoynted to the s^d employment, soe much tending to the settleing of our p'sent peace in theise parts, soe the Almighty would crowne our weak endeavours with speedy success in the said designe.

(Signed) "Ralph Ashton.
"John Moore.

"Ormskirk, 5 Ap. 1644."

The four following days were, on their part, consumed in these unholy exercises; but the garrison, tired with inaction, resolved to awaken them and turn their thoughts into a more profitable channel.

On Wednesday, the 10th of April, says the MS. journal, "about eleven o'clock, Captn Farmer and Captn

* One of these sons of violence, Bradshaw of Brazen-nose, took occasion, before his patrons at Wigan, to profane the 14th verse of the 15th chapter of Jeremiah, from thence proving that Lady Derby was the scarlet whore and the whore of Babylon, whose walls he made as flat and thin as his own discourse.

Mullineux Rattcliffe, Lieu^t^ Penckett, Lieu^t^ Woorrale, wth 140 souldiers, sallyed out at a postern gate, beate the enemy from all theire worke and batteries, wch were now cast up round the house, naile^a^ all theire canon, killed about 50 men, took 60 armes, one collours, and three drumes, in which acc'on, Captn Rattcliffe deserves this remembrance, that wth 3 souldiers, the rest of his squadron being scattered wth execuc'on of the enemy, he cleared two sconces, and slew 7 men wth his owne hand, Lieu^t^ Woorrall, ingageing himself in another worke among 50 of the enemy, bare the fury of all, till Captn Farmer relieved him, who, to the wonder of us all, came off without any dangerous wound.*—The sally-port was that day warded by Captn Chisnall, who with fresh men stood ready for succour of ours, had they been putt to the extremity; but they bravely marched round the works, and came in att the great gates, where Captn Ogle wth a p'ty of musketeers kept open the passage. Captn Rawstorne hadd the charge of the musketeers upon the walls, which hee plac'd to the best advantage to vex the enemy in their flight. Captn Foxe, by a collours from the Eagle Tower, gave signall when to march and when to retreate, according to the motions of the enemy, which hee observed at a distance.—In all this service wee had but one man mortally wounded, and wee tooke onely one prisoner, an officer, for intelligence. In former sallyes some prisoners were taken, and by exchange releast, Colonel Ashton and Rigby promising to sett at liberty as many of the king's friends, then prisoners in Lancaster, Manchester, Preston, and other places proposed by her ladishipp. But most unworthily they broke condic'ons, it suiting well with their religion neither to observe faith with God nor men; and this occasioned a greater slaughter than either her la^pp^ or the captaynes desired, because wee were in no condic'on to keepe prisoners,

* Plus animi est inferenti quam periculum propulsanti.—*Cæs. Com.*

and knew the co'manders wold never release 'em but upon base or dishonourable terms."

Though their cannon had been injured in the spiking, yet were they not rendered useless ; for the same night they " played a sacre twice," it is said, " to tell us they had cannon that wold speke tho' our men had endeavoured to steele up all their lippes."

On the 15th a grenado fell short of the house, in a walk near the chapel tower : some pieces of the shell, two inches thick, flew over the wall, and were gathered up by the attendants. It was a mighty achievement to fire this unwieldy engine, requiring great labour and exertion to fill up its mouth when once it had vomited forth its malice. The day after, they loaded it with stone : to their great joy, Morgan and his bombardiers beheld one of them strike within the body of the house, it being always a matter of some uncertainty where the ball might spend itself. Indeed, it was said, in derision it might be, that sometimes their guns occasioned more damage to the besiegers than to the besieged.

Morgan now set to work, keeping as accurately as he might the head of the blatant beast to the same level, and loading it with a grenado. When the gunner had finished his task and lighted the fusee, Morgan rubbed his hands for joy. Retiring sharply, off went the missile with an explosion that shook the whole fabric. When the smoke was gone they perceived some trifling damage in an old court, where the bomb, striking about half a yard into the earth, burst as it rose, much abated of its violence; yet it shook down some slight buildings near, but without hurting anyone, save two women who had their hands scorched as a memorial of their presence at the siege of Lathom.

This mortar-piece was like some mighty dragon of old, causing great terror in the minds of the soldiers, who knew not how to escape, but were in continual fear and watchfulness, dreading the assaults of this terrible monster. To allay their apprehensions, and

LATHOM HOUSE.
As it existed before the siege, restored from existing documents.

to show their own indifference, the captains lodged in the uppermost rooms, behind clay walls, when not upon duty; and many other devices were resorted to for the purpose of encouraging their troops. One circumstance, however, seemed to renew their courage; a gunner opposite, as he was mounting the ramparts to see the success of his shot, was slain by a marksman from one of the towers. The next day one of their cannoneers was slain through the porthole by a skilful hand, which made the enemy more cautious than formerly. Yet did they not slacken their endeavours, but fired almost incessantly. On the Saturday afternoon they played their mortar-piece five times; and in the night twice with stones, and once with a grenado, which by the turning of the gunner fell short of the house.

On Easter Monday and Tuesday Colonel Rigby must needs gratify the country people with some pastime. He had already spent upwards of two thousand pounds, and his great pretensions were hitherto unfulfilled. Accordingly he ordered his batteries to be directed against the Eagle Tower, which, as we have before seen, stood near the centre of the buildings, and was the place where Lady Derby and the children usually lodged.

"We will strike off a horn of the beast, or level one of her hills," said Rigby, as he strode forth early on that morning to the enterprise.

"Which seven towers be the seven hills of Rome or spiritual Antichrist," said Jackson, his chaplain, who kept near his master, or rather kept his master between himself and the Babel that roused his indignation. Morgan was just preparing his engines when Rigby approached, cautiously worming his way along the trenches, for the marksmen were becoming unmercifully expert by reason of continued practice.

The match was lighted—when bounce went the shot, a four-and-twenty-pounder, against the Eagle Tower.

"We will beat the old lady from her perch: I find

she hath taken to high-roosting of late," said Morgan, as he watched the despatch and destination of his messenger.

The ball had entered into her ladyship's chamber, where she and the children were at breakfast. With as little emotion as Charles the Twelfth on a like occasion, she merely remarked, that since they were likely to have disagreeable intruders, she must e'en seek a new lodging.

"But," said she, rising with great dignity, "I will keep my house while a building is left above my head."

This mischievous exploit, though an occasion at the time of great triumph and exultation to the besiegers, was the main cause of their subsequent expulsion and defeat.

We now propose to follow out their operations with more minuteness, tracing the consequences of this action to its final result.

That same night some of the garrison, having permission from their commanders, annoyed their enemies with strange and noisome alarms, during which they contrived to steal some powder, and other necessaries of which they were much in want.

Colonels Egerton and Rigby were in close counsel before their tent when they beheld a terrible appearance moving towards them—looking in the dark like the leaders of some mighty army, waving their torches to light them to the assault. This frightful apparition was a poor forlorn horse, studded with lights fastened to cords, that shook and flickered about in so fearful a manner. In this plight he had been turned out of the gates, the garrison looking on, with frightful shouts and yells.

The sentinels ran from their posts, crying out that the king's army was coming. In an instant all was uproar and confusion, the trenches were cleared, and happy was he that came foremost in the rout.

Rigby clasped on his sword-belt, which he had doffed

for the night. Springing on his horse, he met some of the runaways, whom he forced back, hoping by their means to stem the main torrent. But, lo! in the very height of the panic, appeared another and more direful intruder—an avenue of fire seemed to extend from the walls to their own trench. It appeared as though the enemy had by some unaccountable means formed in a double line from the fortress, illuminated rank and file as if by magic—flinging their torches by one simultaneous and well-concerted movement into the air with great order and regularity.

Had a legion from the puissant army of Beelzebub been approaching, their terror could not have been greater. Yet fear kept many from escaping, while they knew not which way to run for safety. Rigby in the nick of time galloped up to this awful and hostile appearance, crying out to his troops that he would soon demolish the bugbear. This saying encouraged some of the runaways, who followed him to the combat. Approaching within a sword's length, for he was not deficient either in hardihood or valour, he made a furious stroke right in the face of this flaming apparition, when down it fell, revealing its own harmlessness and their cowardice.

Taking advantage of the panic which followed the lighted horse, a few of the garrison had thrown a cord covered with matches and other combustibles round a tree, close to the enemy's camp; one end was fastened near the walls, and the other was quickly carried back after being passed round the tree. The whole on being lighted was swung to and fro, producing the terrific appearance we have described.

Rigby was greatly mortified at this exploit; it seemed as though they were become the jest and laughing-stock of the garrison.

Morgan at this moment galloped up in great dudgeon. The enemy had found him similar employment, he having twice bravely discharged his cannon, loaded

with cartridge and chainshot, against two lighted matches thrust into balls of clay that were thrown at him from the walls.

The leaders, provoked beyond measure, speedily assembled in council. Egerton, who had the most influence, from the beginning had urged milder measures, thinking to starve the enemy into submission; but Morgan, Rigby, and some others were now red-hot for mischief, smarting from their late ridiculous disaster.

"And what have we gotten by delay?" said Rigby; "we have wearied our soldiers, wasted our powder, and emptied our purses; and this proud dame still beats and baffles us, casting her gibes in our very teeth, which we deserve to lose for our pains."

"Take thine own course, then," said Egerton, mildly. "We are brethren, serving one cause only; the which, being best served, is best won."

"Then be to-morrow ours," said Morgan, with his usual heat and impatience. "We will burn them up like a heap of dry faggots. The house, though well fenced against our shot, hath yet much inward building of wood, and you shall see a pretty bonfire kindled by my bomb-shells—a roaring blaze that shall ride on the welkin between here and Beeston Castle!"

"Whilst thou art plying thy vocation we will scale the walls, and the sword shall slay what the fire hath failed to devour," said Rigby.

"Fire and sword!" cried Egerton. "Ye are apt at a simile; but, methinks, these be your own similitudes."

"They give their prisoners no quarter," said Morgan; "and why should we sheathe the sword when a weapon is at our own throat?"

"Why, doubtless they have more mouths to feed than they can conveniently supply," said the more pacific personage. "Living men, to keep them so, even though prisoners, require feeding."

" Our vengeance is sure, though tardy," said Rigby, rising in great choler. " The blood of these martyrs crieth from the ground. To-morrow ! " and he breathed a bloody vow, looking fiercely up to heaven in the daring and impious attitude of revenge.

" We had best give her ladyship another summons , which, if she refuse, her blood be upon her own head ! " Saying this, Egerton abruptly left the council.

On the next morning, which was cold and drizzly, a " pragmatical " drummer went out from the nearer trench, beating his drum for a parley, lest his person should be dismissed without ceremony to the hungry kites.

Early had he been summoned to Rigby's lodging where Ashton and Morgan were contriving a furious epistle to the contumacious defenders of their lives and substance. A summons, couched in no very measured terms, was drawn up, to the purport that the fortress should be surrendered, and all persons, goods, arms, and munitions therein, to the mercy of parliament ; and by the next day, before two o'clock, her ladyship to return her answer, otherwise at her peril. Their valour grew hotter with the reading of this cruel message, which they secretly hoped and suspected she would refuse. The drum-major was called in, one Gideon Greatbatch by name—a long, straight-haired, sallow-faced personage, of some note among the brethren for zeal and impiety. By this we mean that awful and profane use of Scripture phraseology with which many of these gifted preachers affected to interlard their everyday discourse, attaching a ludicrous solemnity to matters the most trivial and unimportant.

In delineating this species of character, unfortunately not extinct in our own days, we do not hold it up to ridicule, but to reprehension. Irreverence and profanity, under whatever pretext, are without excuse, even beneath the mask of holy zeal and ardent devotion.

The man stalked in with little ceremony and less

manners. He stood stiff and erect, the image of pride engendered by ignorance.

"'Tis our last," said Rigby, folding up the message; "and if our arms are blessed, as we have hoped, and, it may be, unworthily deserved, ere the going down of to-morrow's sun yon strong tower wherein she trusteth shall be as smoke; for the hope of the wicked shall perish."

"Yea, their idols shall fall down; yea, their walls shall be as Jericho," said the drum-major, with a sing-song whine, to sanctify his blasphemous allusions, "and shall utterly fall at the sound of——"

"Thy two drumsticks, mayhap," returned Morgan, sharply; for this latter personage, though his presence became needful in the camp by reason of his reputed skill and bravery, was a great scandal to the real and conscientious professors—of whom not a few had joined the ranks of the besiegers—as well as the hypocritical and designing; some of whom did not hesitate to liken him to Achan and the accursed thing, by reason of which they were discomfited before their enemies.

"Thine ungodly speeches, Master Morgan, I would humbly trust, may not be as the fuel that, when the fire cometh, shall consume the camp, even the righteous with the wicked," said Gideon, as if shrinking from the contact of so unholy a personage.

Morgan replied not to this deprecation, save by swearing—covertly, though it might be—at the impudence and insubordination of these inferior agents, whose disorderly conduct it was necessary to connive at, while they were looked upon as saints and prophets—men from whose presence was impiously expected the blessing and protection of Heaven.

A loud screaming was heard, and Rigby, darting a furious look through the doorway, ordered it to be closed.

"Another porker!" said he. "I verily think she hath provision behind the walls that would last out our

siege till doomsday. There is treachery somewhere. Have we not heard, morning by morning, the self-same cry ? "

" A whole herd of swine have been martyred in the cause," said Morgan, sneeringly.

" Every day they have slain a pig," said the leader of the drums. " Two score and eight," reckoning upon his fingers. " Verily a drove from the legion."

They knew not that this unfortunate swine, the only one in the garrison, was made to perform so uncomfortable a duty every morning to mislead the besiegers, and impress them with the idea of a plentiful supply within the walls.

" Even the rabble about the garrison throw shives of bread into our trenches," said Morgan ; " and once or twice I have thought their muskets were loaden with peas instead of pellets."

" Then is our assault the more urgent," replied Rigby : " delay doth but increase her strength. Prince Rupert, too, some fair morning, may jump between us and headquarters."

" I have as many grenadoes," said Morgan, " as will save his highness the trouble. Were he here, I would make him dance the Flemish *coranto*."

" The Amalekites shall ye utterly destroy," said Gideon, with a sudden indrawing of the breath, as though he were suffering the pangs and throes of possession. " Neither shall ye spare the women and the little ones nor the stuff ; no, not even a kid for a burnt-offering. Your eye shall not spare as Saul spare Agag, whom Samuel hewed in pieces."

" Keep thy counsel to light thine own courage. Yon fiery-tempered woman will not be over-nice in her respect to thy vocation. Peradventure she may dangle thy carcase over the walls in defiance of our summons." Morgan would have rebuked him farther, had not Rigby hastily put the message into his hands, and bade him good speed.

With inward but audible murmurs at this unholy connection, for Morgan valued not their prayers a rush, Gideon strode forth, his eyes twinkling grievously as the drizzling rime came on his face. His long, ungainly figure, surmounted by a high-peaked hat, was seen cautiously stealing through the trenches. Near to the embrasure by Morgan's mortar-piece he made a sudden halt. After preparing his drum, he first beat the roll to crave attention. He then stepped upon the redoubt, drumming the usual signal for a parley. It was soon answered from the walls, and Gideon, with much ceremony and importance, arrived with his musical appendage before the gate. The requisite formalities being gone through, the drawbridge was lowered, and this parliamentary representative was speedily admitted through a little wicket into the Babylon which he abhorred. His very feet seemed in danger of defilement. He looked as if breathing the very atmosphere of pollution; but when ordered to kneel down that he might be blindfolded, his spirit rose indignantly at the command.

"Ye be contemners and despisers of our holy heritage. I have not bowed the knee to Baal, nor will I worship the beast or they that have his name on their foreheads. Do with me as ye list. Ye would cover mine eyes that your iniquities may be hidden;—but ye shall suddenly be destroyed, and none shall deliver."

A loud laugh was the answer to this denunciation; for truly it were a marvellous thing to hear an ignorant, arrogant drummer misapply and profane the words of Holy Writ, wresting the Scriptures to their destruction, if not his own.

In the outer court soldiers were playing at span-counter with silver moneys, which Gideon observing, again lifted up the voice of warning and rebuke.

"But destruction cometh upon them, even as upon a woman in——"

"Peace, thou spirit of a drum-stick!" cried one of

them, and, as though he were playing at chuck-farthing, he threw a tester between his teeth ; for the soldiers had about fifty pounds amongst them in silver coin, but it was of no use except as so many counters, which they lent one another by handfuls without telling. Sometimes one soldier had won the whole, then another ; but if they had been heaps of the rarest jewels they had been of less worth than pebble-stones.

Gideon's speech was marred in the delivery ; thinking he had been hit with a stone, he sputtered out the offending morsel ; but, seeing the coin with the king's image and superscription, he gathered it up again.

" This shall be to me for a prey, even a spoil, as Moses spoiled the Egyptians." Saying this, Gideon thrust the king's money into his pocket, and consented to be blindfolded, as was customary, in order that he should not act the spy in his progress. He heard many gates unbarred, many sentries challenged, and the passwords demanded. Indeed, the order and discipline throughout was of an excellent and well-contrived regularity.

" Make way for the drum ! " ran along the avenues, as though he were passing through a numerous array of guards and soldiery. At length he was safely deposited in a spacious hall used as a guard-room, where his conductors delivered him to Captain Ogle, the officer in waiting that morning upon her ladyship. Being informed she was at prayers, for, as we are told, " her first care was the service of God, which in sermons and solemn prayers she daily saw performed," Gideon lifted up his hands and said :

" Their new moons and their fasts are an abomination." He then desired to be conducted near the fire, for the double purpose of drying his threadbare red coat, and relieving his extreme length by a change of position.

He had not waited long ere the signal was given for an audience. Still blindfolded, he was led by a circuitous

route into a little wainscoted chamber lighted by a single bay-window. Here the bandage was taken from his eyes, and when the dimness had a little subsided, he beheld that heroic lady for the first time whom he had often compared, in no very moderate terms, to Jezebel, and many other names equally appropriate. A very different person she appeared from what his heated and morbid fancy had suggested. Indeed, if she had been the personification of all evil, with a demon's foot and a fiend's visage, he had been less surprised than to find her with the outward form and attributes of humanity.

She was sitting with the children, before a narrow table covered with papers. She wore a black habit, with a white kerchief on her head, and a long Flanders veil of rich open work. This she threw back, and Gideon beheld a countenance not at all either commanding or heroic, but one to which smiles and good-nature would have been most congenial, though a shade of anxiety was now thrown over the natural expression of her features. Her eye seemed to have forgotten its bland and benevolent aspect, and was fixed sharply upon him. For a moment his spiritual pride was daunted, and that natural and inherent principle, not extinct though often dormant—a deference to superiority, whether of intellect or station—rendered him for a while mute and inoffensive. It is even said that he made a sort of half-conscious obeisance ; but his mind misgiving him during the offence, which smote him on the sudden as an act of homage and idolatrous veneration, he breathed out a very audible prayer.

" Pardon thy servant in this matter, even if I have bowed in the house of Rimmon." As he said this, he threw himself back, lifting his narrow eyes towards the ceiling ; then thrusting out his hand with the despatch at arm's length, he was striding forward, but Ogle intervened ere he had made his way to the Countess.

" With all courtesy, friend," said he, " these

communications must proceed from the officer on duty."

With great gallantry and respect the captain presented it to his mistress.

"Eye-service and will-worship!" growled Gideon. "'Tis like your vain and Popish idolatry and the like, through the ministry of saints, even to a woman, vain and sinful as yourselves. I would as soon commit my prayers to the angel of the bottomless pit!"

Her ladyship had broken open the seals. Her eye kindled as she spoke:

"Thou hadst thy reward were we to hang thee up at the gate. Yet art thou but a foolish instrument in the hands of this traitor Rigby; and we do not punish the weapon, but him that wields it."

Now Gideon, finding himself moved by natural head and choler, and mistaking this wrath for a righteous indignation, thought himself surely called upon to reprove these unrighteous ones for their iniquities. His body fell into the usual disposition for a harangue. His eyes rolled upwards, and his whole frame swung to and fro whilst the exhortation was preparing. To his great mortification, however, the lady quitted the room, leaving word for them to follow her to the hall.

The preacher was greatly chagrined, when his eyes resumed their office, to find himself almost thrust out and on his way back to the guard-chamber. A number of soldiers and domestics were here assembled. Lady Derby, with her chaplain, steward, and captains, ranged on each side, stood at the higher end of the chamber.

Silence was commanded, whilst she read aloud the despatch.

"And this—and this, my answer!" said she, tearing the paper as she spoke, and throwing the fragments indignantly from her.

"Tell that insolent rebel he shall neither have our persons, our goods, nor yet this house. When our strength and provision be spent, we shall find a fire

more merciful than Rigby ; and then, if the providence of God prevent it not, my goods and house shall burn in his sight ;—myself, children, and soldiers, rather than fall into his hands, will seal our religion and loyalty in the same flame ! "

A loud shout burst through the assembly, who, with one general voice, cried out :

" We will die for his Majesty and your honour :—God save the king ! "

Gideon's countenance grew terrible, and he seemed as though suffering under some violent excitement. Lifting up his hand, he was about to thunder forth anathemas and denunciations, the dealing out of which, strange to say, most parties agree in reserving to themselves. Even men whose honesty and single-heartedness we cannot doubt—who have boldly defended our rights and liberties against religious tyranny and intolerance —have still arrogated to themselves exclusively the control of opinions and modes of belief :—wielding the terrors of Heaven where the arm of Omnipotence can alone be felt ; their efforts futile and ineffectual, as though a feeble worm were attempting to grasp the quiver—to launch the bolt and the arrow from the skies.

But Gideon's purpose was again frustrated : the impious idolaters, refusing to listen, blindfolded him before he was aware.

But his spirit kindled suddenly, and he cried aloud :

" Yet shut your eyes wilfully, and go blindfold to your destruction. To-morrow these walls in which ye trust, this Egypt in whom your soul delighteth, shall be as Sodom. Brimstone and fire shall devour you , and they that flee from it shall not escape ! "

Gideon and his threats were, however, speedily thrust out at the gates, and the answer transmitted through him was faithfully reported to the council.

Though this heroic woman was not daunted, yet she saw her soldiers were, at times, dispirited, by reason of the expected succours so long delayed. The mortar-

piece, too, which, if it had been well managed, was sufficient to have laid the fortress in ruins, was an object of daily terror and annoyance.

One of the MS. journals states,* " The little ladyes had stomack to digest cannon ; but the stoutest souldiers had noe hearts for granadoes, and might not they att once free themselves from the continual expectac'on of death ? "

Her ladyship was well aware that inactivity is, of all things, the most dangerous and dispiriting to the soldier, who, used to the bustle and array of camps, doth fear nothing so much as a quiet home and winter quarters.

It was needful that something should be done, some decisive blow struck ; for, according to the historian, " Chaunges of tymes are the most fitt for brave attempts, and delayes they are dangerous, where softnes and quyetness draweth more danger than hazarding rashly."

" A hard choice either to kill or be killed " ; but such was their case. The Countess therefore proposed that the next morning, a little while after daybreak, they should make a sortie ; and though ordnance was planted against every passage, yet that they should sally forth, and stake their all upon one desperate throw.

On the 26th April, about four o'clock, before sunrise, the action commenced. Captain Chisnall and Captain Fox, with Lieutenants Brettargh, Penketh, Walthew, and Woorrall were appointed for the service. Captain Ogle had the main-guard to secure a retreat at the southern gate, while Rawsthorne had the charge of the sally-gate to secure a retreat on the eastern side. Captain Ratcliffe had the command of the marksmen and musketeers on the walls, while Farmer, with the reserve, stood ready at the parade, to relieve any of them in case of necessity. All things being ready, Captain Chisnall and two lieutenants issued out at the eastern sally-port. The morning favoured their attempt, being

* Harleian MSS. 2043.

wet and foggy, so that before he was discovered he got completely under their cannon, marching immediately upon the scouts where the enemy had planted their great gun.

"It cost him a light skirmish to gain the fort; at last hee entered; many slayne, some prisoners, and some escaping. Now by the command of that battery, the retreat being assured, Capt. Foxe seconds him wth much bravery, beateing upon their trenches from the easterne to the south-west point, till hee came to the work wch secur'd the morter-peece, wch being guarded wth 50 men, hee found sharpe service, forceing his way through muskett and cannon, and beateing the enemy out of the sconce wth stones, his muskett, by reason of the high worke, being unserviceable. After a quarter of an houres hard service, his men gott the trench and scal'd the rampier, where many of the enemy fledd, the rest were slayne. The sconce, thus won, was made good by a squadron of musketteers, which much annoyed the enemy, attempting to come upp agayne. The 2 maine works thus obtained, the two captaynes wth ease walked the rest of the round, whilst Mr. Broome, wth a companye of her la^pps^ servants and some fresh souldiers, had a care to levell the ditch, and by a present devise, with ropes lifting the morter-peece to a low dragge, by strength of men drew it into the house, Capt. Ogle defending the passage ag^t^ another companye of the enemye which play'd upon their retreate. The like endeavour was used to gayne theire greate gunnes; but lying beyond the ditch, and being of such bulke and weight, all our strength could not bringe them off before the whole army had fallen upon us; however, our men took tyme to poyson all the cannon round, if anything will doe the feate, Capt. Rawstorne still defending the first passe ag^t^ some offers of the enemy to come up by the wood."

It was near the conclusion of this affray, as Mr. Broome, the steward, and several of his helpers, were

encompassing the great dragon, which had so often vomited forth fire and smoke upon them, intending to carry it away captive, that they heard a voice from the breech below :

" Hold, ye uncircumcised :—I will make your house desolate, and the glory thereof shall be turned into ashes."

The mortar was ready charged, and they beheld Gideon, with a lighted match, springing towards them. Several of the men drew aside in dismay ; but, as Providence willed it, he was prevented from his purpose, the light being struck from his hand, and himself tumbled backwards into a deep and muddy ditch, extinguishing both light and life apparently together. But he arose, and would have run a-tilt at them in this unsavoury condition, had he not been caught by one of his enemies, who waggishly exclaimed :

" Let us yoke this great Amalekite to the gun. He'll help us well over the ditch."

This goodly piece of advice was not neglected ; and the unhappy Gideon, fastened between two yoke-fellows, was dragged on by main force, the hindmost threatening to shoot him if he made any resistance.

In vain did he cry out for vengeance upon them. His gods were deaf—no miracle was wrought for his deliverance ; and though he would have called down fire from heaven upon his adversaries, the thunders he impiously desired died harmless on his own tongue.

We again quote the words of the journal :

" This action continued an houre, with the loss of two men on our part, who, after they were mortally wounded, still fired upon the enemy, till all retreating. What number of the enemy were slain it is not easy to guesse. Besides the execuc'on done in their trenches, Capt. Farmours and Capt. Rattcliffes reserves, wth the best marksmen, played upon them from the walls with much slaughter, as they quitt theire holds. Our men brought in many armes, three drums, and but five prisoners,

preserved by Capt. Chisnall to show that he had mercy as well as valour. One of theese was an assistant to their engineere, Browne, who discovered to us the nature of their trench, in which they had laboured two monthes to draw away our water. Theire first designe was to drayne and open our springs, not considering theire rise from a higher ground south-east from the house, wch must needs supply our deepe well, where-ever they suncke their fall: this invenc'on faileing, they bringe up an open trench in a worme work, the earth being indented or sawed for the securitie of their myners, and the ditch two yards wide and three deepe for the fall of the water.

"But now neither ditches nor aught els troubled our souldiers, theire grand terror, the morter-peece, which had frighted 'em from theire meate and sleepe, like a dead lyon, quyetely lying among 'em; everye one had his eye and his foote upon him, shouteing and rejoiceing as merrily as they used to doe wth theire ale and bagpypes. Indeed ev'y one had this apprehenc'on of the service, that the maine worke was done, and what was yet behind but a meere pastime.

"Her la^pp^ though not often overcarryed wth any light expressions of joy, yet religiously sensible of soe great a blessing, and desirous, according to her pious disposition, to returne acknowledgements to the righte authour, God alone, presently commands her chaplaynes to a publike thanksgiving.

"The enemy, thus terrifyed with this defeate, durst not venture theire workes agayne till midnight; towards morneing removeing some of theire cannon, and the next night stealeing away all the rest, save one peece for a memorand. This one escapyt nayleing, which the colonells durst not venture on its owne mount, but planted att a distance, for feare of the madmen in the garrison.

"One thing may not heere bee omitted: that day that our men gave Rigby that shameful defeate, had

hee destined for the p'secuteing of his utmost cruelty. Hee had invited, as it is now gen'ally confest, all his friends, the holy abettors of this mischiefe, to come see the house yeelded or burnt, hee haveing purposed to use his morter gunne wth fireballs or granadoes all afternoone; but her la^{pp} before two o'clocke (his own tyme) gave him a very skurvy satisfying answ^{r}, soe that his friends came opportunely to comfort him, who was sicke of shame and dishonour, to be routed by a lady and a handfull of men."

This proved a sore disaster to the besiegers. The soldiers, too, began to cry out for their pay. The long-expected plunder of Lathom had hitherto kept them quiet; but they were now willing to leave this precious booty to the next comers, and content themselves with their stated allowance.

Rigby, fearful of the crumbling away and dispersion of his army, made shift to furnish some small arrears of their pay, declaring that it had cost him £2,000 of his own moneys during the siege; but how he got such great store of gold we are not informed, save that "he was once a lawyer, and a bad one!"

Still there were many deserters, escaping even in the open day; not a few of them coming over with valuable intelligence to the garrison.

Wearied with duty, and sorely perplexed, Rigby sent for Col. Holland, from Manchester, to his assistance. Many days now elapsed, during which little happened worth recording on either side. On the 23rd May, Captain Moseley brought another message to her ladyship, desiring, in terms of great courtesy and respect, that she would grant him an interview. He was received with great ceremony; for she abated not a whit of the dignity belonging to her high birth and station.

"Captain Moseley," said she, having read the summons, commanding her that she should yield up the house, together with the ammunition, arms, goods,

servants, children, and her own person, too—submitting to the mercy of parliament, "you are, I understand, an honourable man and a soldier."

He bowed with great humility.

"I would not receive this from any other. But——" and her lip curled proudly as she spoke. "Here seems a slight mistake in the wording of your message. They should rather have written *cruelty* and not *mercy!*"

"Nay, my lady," he replied, "the mercy of parliament. Trust me, you will not be evil entreated at their hands."

"The *mercies* of the wicked are *cruel*," said she, quickly, but with great composure. "Not that I mean," she continued, "a wicked parliament, of which body I have an honourable and reverend esteem, but wicked agents and factors, such as Moore and Rigby, who for the advantage of their own interests labour to turn kingdoms into blood and ruin. Besides, 'tis dangerous treating when the sword is given into the enemies' hand."

"Most assuredly, madam, as our tractates on the art of war teach us—which it seemes you have not studied in vain," said Moseley, bowing with an air of great deference and gallantry. "Your ladyship is commander-in-chief, we hear."

"My lord being absent, I am left in trust, and cannot listen to treaties without his permission."

"Not to dishonourable overtures, assuredly. But if we agree to your own conditions—quitting the house in the way it shall seem best to your ladyship, as was once the basis of your own propositions, I believe, it cannot in this case be a reproach or a breach of trust, but will prevent much damage, and be the saving of many lives."

"I will not treat without my lord's commands, Captain Moseley, and I have listened to you longer than is expedient. It is unjust to myself, and these brave

defenders, that I appear in any way doubtful of their ability and courage. For their sakes, and for my own, I must end this parley."

The officer bowed low at this peremptory dismissal, wishing her ladyship's resolutions were less firm or her means more ample.

"I can but deliver your reply. Yet——" He hesitated awhile. "There be fierce and bloody men about the camp, who would lay down their own lives to compass your destruction. It is not in our power to restrain them."

"One of these flaming zealots is already extinguished: we have him safe under cover," said her ladyship, smiling; "in our own custody, I trow. He threatened us with all the plagues of Egypt and that of his own tongue to boot—the worst that e'er visited the garrison. One morning, an earthquake would devour us; another, we were to be visited with the destruction of Sodom. Some of our men once looked out for the coming tempest, and buffeted him well for their disappointment. He seems either malignant or insane; but in charity, of which Christian exercise he seems utterly ignorant, we suppose the latter. We have therefore made his feet fast in the stocks, from whence, I hear, he pronounces his anathemas as confidently as though he were armed with the power and thunders of the Vatican!"

"May I crave the name of this doughty personage? We have but too many of them amongst us."

"Verily, 'tis your drum, by whose hands I have had a message heretofore. The chances of war have again brought him hither—but now a prisoner!"

"Gideon Greatbatch?"

"The same. We have heard him, with many blasphemous allusions, liken himself unto that great one among the judges of Israel—and truly he seems more fitted to wield the sword than the drumstick!"

"Your ladyship would perhaps indulge me with an

interview. It might comfort him to see one from the camp."

"Provided that no sinister design or advantage be lurking under this request. Yet am I speaking, I would fain hope, to a gentleman and a soldier."

Moseley was conducted down a dark flight of steps, damp and slippery. The ooze and slime rendered his footing tedious and insecure. Soon he recognized the mighty voice of Gideon bellowing forth a triumphant psalm. Another stave was just commencing as the door opened, and the torch glared lurid and dismally on the iron features and grisly aspect of the captive. A pair of rude stocks, through which Gideon's long extremities protruded, stood in the middle of the dungeon. He scowled terrifically at the intruders; but suddenly resumed his exercise.

"Still at thy devotions?" said Moseley; but the moody fanatic vouchsafed not to reply.

"We must wait the finishing of this duty, I fear," said the captain, knowing that interruption would be useless. Silently they awaited the conclusion, when Gideon abruptly cried out:

"Captain Moseley, are ye, too, cast into this den of lions?"

"I came hither on an embassage, and I have craved this visit ere I depart."

"Hast furnished my breakfast?" inquired this stalwart knight from the enchanted wood. "I think your garrison be short of victual, or my——"

"Hold thy tongue, thou piece of ill-contrived impertinence," said the gaoler. "We have victual and drink, too; but for such as thou art, it were an ill-bestowed morsel. I marvel what can have possessed my lady to keep thee alive!"

The gaoler drew out from his provision bag a small dark-coloured loaf, which he threw at the hungry captive, who, to say the truth, had been half-starved since his imprisonment.

Gideon was devouring it greedily without any further notice, when he suddenly cried out to his keeper:

"Where gat ye this coarse stuff? I would not say good-morrow to my dog with so crusty a meal."

"It was tossed over the wall," replied the gaoler. "Our friends oft supply us that way with provision, captain. I picked it up as I came, and thought it was too good for thy dainty appetite."

"Captain Moseley," said the hungry drummer, with great earnestness, "take this. Break it before thy brethren and show them how vilely these Egyptian taskmasters do entreat us in the house of bondage."

There was something more than usually impressive in his manner. Moseley took the loaf as requested; and the gaoler, as if the object before him were beneath suspicion, exclaimed with a knowing look:

"Had I not brought the manchet myself, and watched thee narrowly, I should have guessed thou hadst crammed some secret message therein to the camp. But I defy thee, or any of thy batch, to cheat old Gabriel, the rogue's butler!"

"Prithee, search," said Captain Moseley, drawing the loaf from his pocket; "thou mayest, peradventure, find treachery in a toothmark, for o' my troth they be legibly written."

"Nay," said Gabriel, with great self-importance, "the knave's jaws will score no ciphers. I had as lief interpret pot-hooks and ladles."

The captain, again thrusting it beneath his belt, promised to show his commanders with what coarse fare and severity the prisoners were treated.

"Wilt thou that I intercede for thee before the Countess?" he continued; "if so be that she would remit thee of this durance."

In a voice of thunder spake the incorrigible Gideon:

"Intercede!—I would as lief pray to the saints they should intercede with the Virgin Mary. I will rot from this perch piecemeal ere I pray to yonder ungodly woman.

Yet shall I escape out of their hands, but not by mine own might, or mine own strength," said the lion-hearted captive.

Leaving this indomitable Roundhead to his fate, Moseley returned to the camp, reporting the ill success of his mission.

Great part of the day was spent in angry discussion, so that Moseley had nigh forgotten his message from Gideon; yet he remembered it ere he left the council. Pulling out a coarse bannock, to the great astonishment of his auditory, he brake it, relating his interview with the captive. Near to where the prisoner had taken his last mouthful, Moseley found a bit of crumpled paper. The surprise and dismay of the assembly may be conceived after he had read the following billet:

"My dearest Heart,—

"With much joy and comfort I send thee news that his Highness Prince Rupert hath gotten a great victory over the rebels at Newark; and I have besought his Majesty that he should march into Lancashire. By two days, at farthest, these enemies who now beleaguer my house shall be cut off. We purpose to come upon them suddenly, so that they shall be taken in their own snare. I have raised £3,000 on the jewels conveyed to me from Lathom by the last sally, which sum I purpose giving in largess to the soldiers, that it may quicken them to my help. My prayers and blessing for thee and the children.—Thine,

Derby."

This secret intelligence had missed its destination. The gaoler had unfortunately picked it up from where some friendly hand had thrown it, reserving the curious envelope for Gideon's breakfast, not aware of the important message it contained. But the prisoner, more wary than his keeper, when he felt the paper between his teeth, rightly judged that it was some

communication of importance to his enemies, and craftily conveyed it, as we have seen, into the hands of Captain Moseley.

No mean act of heroism for a starving man to wrench the food from his own jaws—a deed we might in vain look for amongst the patriots of our own day—persons who would sneer at the fanaticism, and, it may be, the sincerity of Gideon Greatbatch.

Consternation was visible throughout the assembly. They had all along flattered themselves with the expectation that Prince Rupert's army was too urgently required for the relief of York to have caused them any disturbance ; and, with inward curses on the king for his humanity, secret preparations were made for raising the siege.

Though ignorant of the cause, the garrison soon espied an unusual bustle in the camp. They were evidently preparing for some exploit. One of the spies brought intelligence that two squadrons had departed in the night, and that Colonels Moore and Ashton were on their return to Manchester.

On Monday morning, the 27th of May, it was agreed that Captains Ogle and Rawsthorne should make a sally. But they found the enemy had been beforehand with them, leaving the camp in the utmost terror and disorder. Intelligence now arrived that Prince Rupert had entered Lancashire by way of Stockport, where the Parliament army, under Colonels Duckenfield, Mainwaring, Buckley, and others, had suffered a total rout. The besiegers had commenced their retreat between twelve and one o'clock the preceding night.

Thus ended the first siege of Lathom, after the place had been closely beset four months ; during which time the garrison lost but six men—four in the service, and two by negligence and over-daring.

They were, in general, supplied with provisions, her ladyship seeing the men's rations duly served. Yet were they not seldom pushed to a sally for their dinner ;

their friends outside, by lights and other appointed signals, directing the foragers in their operations.

The enemy shot 107 cannon-balls, 32 stones, and but four grenadoes. By their own confession near 100 barrels of gunpowder were spent, part of which was in supplies to the garrison, who often replenished their stock at the expense of the besiegers. They lost about 500 men, besides wounded and prisoners, according to their own returns.

The next day Rigby, with about 3,000 men, drew up at Eccleston Green, six miles only from Lathom, in great uncertainty which way to march, fearful of meeting with Prince Rupert. In the end, imagining that his Highness would go through Blackburn or Lancaster to the relief of York, Rigby marched off in great haste to Bolton, then a garrison town, and well fortified.

The Prince, hearing of their escape together with Lord Derby, immediately turned their forces in this direction, determined to carry the place by assault, and revenge the insults and barbarity her ladyship had endured. This resolution was terribly accomplished. Sixteen hundred of her besiegers lay dead on the place; and twenty-two colours, which three days before flourished proudly before the house, were presented to her from his Highness by Sir Richard Crane, as a memorial of her deliverance, and "a happy remembrance of God's mercy and goodness to her and her family."

RAVEN CASTLE

" He bargained with two ruffians strong,
Which were of furious mood,
That they should take these children young,
And slay them in a wood.

" Away then went these pretty babes,
Rejoycing at that tide,
Rejoycing with a merry minde,
They should on cock-horse ride."

The Children in the Wood.

SITUATED amid the wild and high moorlands, at whose feet hath stood for ages the royal and ducal capital of the county palatine of Lancaster, once rose a strong border defence called Raven Castle. Its site only remains. This noble and castellated fortress now lies an almost undistinguishable heap on the barren moor; the sheep browse above it, and the herdsman makes his pillow where warriors and dames once met in chivalric pomp, and the chieftain held his feudal and barbaric court.

The point on which it stood is nearly on the line of separation between the counties of York and Lancaster. From the southern declivity of the hill on the Yorkshire side springs one of the rills which fall into the Hodder, a well-known stream, held in great respect by those ambulatory gentlemen whose love of society and amusing recreations leads them to lay in a stock of patience for life in the pursuit of piscatory delights.

This mountainous tract forms part of the forest of Bowland, once ranged by numerous herds of deer, and is still under the jurisdiction of a master-forester, or

bow-bearer, called *Parker*, which office has been held for centuries by a family of that name.

It was in the broad and still moonlight of a spring morning, in the year 16—, that two horsemen were ascending by a steep and difficult pass through the Trough of Bolland, along the hills and almost pathless wilds of the forest. They were apparently of that dubious class called " Knights of the Post "—highwaymen, deer-stealers, or cattle-harriers ; all and every of which occupations they occasionally followed.

As they passed by the edge of a steep ravine, from which hung a few stunted oaks projecting over the gulf, the foremost rider—for the path admitted them not abreast—turned sharply round on his saddle.

" Again !—Didst thou not see it, Michael ? " inquired he, in great alarm.

" Nothing, Anthony, as I do follow thee in this honest trade—nothing, I tell thee, save thine ugly face in this clear moonshine. Prythee, make more speed, and thou wilt have the fewer wry mouths to answer for. Thou art fool enough to make a man forswear honesty, and rid him of his conscience for life. Beshrew me ! thou hast got a troublesome tenant ; either less roguery, or fewer qualms ; depend on't, thou canst not keep friends with both."

" I'll go no farther. Old Hildebrand finds some foul business on his hands, that he would fain thrust into our fingers. A bad business quits best at the beginning ; if once we get to the middle, we might as well go on, or we may be like old Dick, who swam half-way through the mill-pond, and then, being faint-hearted, swam back again."

" Look thee now, thou art a precious ass:—thou wouldst be a wit without brains, and a rogue, ay, a very wicked and unconditional rogue, without courage. Tut, that same cowardly rogue, of all unparalleled villains, is verily the worst. Your liquorish cat, skulking and scared with a windlestraw, is always the biggest

thief, and has the cruellest paws, for all her demure looks and her plausible condescensions."

"I don't care for thy jeers, Michael."

"What!—hast brought thy purpose to an anchor already? 'Tis well. I shall on to Raven Castle with all speed, if it were only to inform one Hildebrand Wentworth of this sudden qualm. Likewise I may, peradventure, remember to tell him of another little qualm thou wast taken with, once upon a time, at the sight of a score of his fat beeves; a little bit of choice roguery played off upon him by honest Anthony of the tender conscience! Look to it, comrade, he shall know of this before thou canst convey thy cowardly carcase out of his clutches. An' it be thou goest forward—mum!—backward! Ha! have I caught thee, my pretty bird?"

At the conclusion of this speech, with the malice of a fiend urging on his hesitating victim to the commission of some loathed act of folly and of crime, the speaker lashed on his companion's beast, and they were soon past the steepest part of the ascent, on their way to Raven Castle. Its present occupier, whom it appears, they had befriended beforetime in the way of their several callings, had sent for them in haste, requiring their aid, it might seem, in some business relative to their profession.

For an hour or two they travelled on as fast as the nature of their track would permit. Day was just brightening in the east, when, emerging from a more than usually intricate path, they pushed through a thick archway of boughs. Suddenly a bare knoll presented itself, sloping towards a narrow rivulet; beyond, a dark and well-fortified mansion stood before them—here and there, a turret-shaped chamber, lifting its mural crown above the rest, rose clear and erect against a glowing sky, now rapidly displacing the grey hues of the morning. The narrow battlements rose up, sharp and distinct, but black as their own grim recesses,

in solemn contrast with the bright and rolling masses from behind, breaking into all the gorgeous tints that betoken a heavy and lurid atmosphere.

They crossed a narrow bridge, and the clattering of their horses' hoofs were soon heard in the courtyard of the castle.

"So, masters, if it had not pleased your betters to have built hostels and roosting-places on the road, I might have been snug in my blanket some hours ago may be."

The personage who thus accosted them was dressed in a plain leathern cap and doublet, with a pair of stout hose that would not have disgraced a burgher of the first magnitude; his short and frizzled beard was curiously twirled and pointed, we may suppose after the fashion of those regions; and his manner and appearance was that of some confidential menial belonging to the establishment. His whole demeanour had in it an air of impertinent authority; his little sharp eyes twinkled in all the plenitude of power, and peered in the faces of the travellers as they alighted to render him an unwilling salutation.

"We have made the best of our road, Master Geoffery, since we left our quarters in Netherdale. But, in troth, it's a weary way, and a drouthy one into the bargain; I have not wet even the tip of this poor beast's nose since we started."

"Go to; an' the beasts be cared for, thine own muzzle may take its chance of a swill. Willy, see to the horses. Now for business. Master has been waiting for you these three hours: make what excuse you may. Heigh-ho! my old skull will leak out my brains soon with these upsittings."

Taking a small lamp from a recess, he commanded the strangers to follow. A wide staircase led to the gallery from whence a number of low doors communicated with the chambers or dormitories. Entering a passage from an obscure corner, they ascended a winding stair.

The huge and terrific spurs of the intruders struck with a shrill clank on the narrow steps, mingled with the grumblings of Master Geoffery Hardpiece; a continual muttering was heard from the latter, by way of running accompaniment to the directions which, ever and anon, he found it needful to set forth.

"There—an ass, a very ass!—keep thy face from the wall, I tell thee, and lift up thy great leathern hoofs."

Then came another series of murmurings, mingled with confused and rambling sentences.

"This stair is like old Giles's horn, it's long a-winding. Now—thy spurs, is it? Aroynt thee, knave; thou art like to frighten the children with their clattering. They are up, and ready for their trip. Alice will stitch a pillow to your pummels and they'll ride bravely, the pretty dears. Stop there, I tell ye; I'll just say that you wait his pleasure, and return."

Old Hardpiece tapped gently at a small door; it was opened hastily; and a few moments only elapsed ere Master Geoffery's cunning face was cautiously extended out of the narrow opening. He beckoned to his companions, and at once ushered them into a low chamber. A lamp, half extinguished, stood on the floor; the walls were nearly bare, and streaked in various colours by the moisture filtering from the roof; a curiously-carved oak-table and two or three stone benches comprised the furniture of the apartment; a few rusty swords, with two large pistols nearly falling from their holsters, hung from the wall. In one corner, reposing in decayed dignity, were seen some halberds, with several unmatched pairs of mildewed boots; near to the window, or rather loophole, heaped up in dust and disorder, lay a score or two of rusty helmets, their grim appurtenances mostly broken and disjointed.

Pacing to and fro in this audience-chamber appeared a figure of about the middle size, attired in a loose open garment. His head was nearly bald; a few thin locks only hung from the lower part of his poll; and yet his

age was not so far advanced as the scanty covering of his forehead might seem to intimate. He paused not as they entered ; but during the greater part of the succeeding interview persevered in the same restless and abrupt gait, as though repose were anguish, and it was only by a continued change of position that he could soothe the rising perturbation of his spirit.

" Is this your haste, when my commands are most urgent ? "

He turned sharply upon them as he spoke : his eyes grew wild and keen ; but at times a heaviness and languor, as if from long watching, seemed to oppress them.

" We could not——" Michael was stammering out an apology, when thus interrupted :

" Enough ! I know what thou wouldst say. Let thy comrade remain below. Geoffery, conduct him to the refectory ; Michael abides here. Haste, and let refreshments be prepared."

What was the purport of the conversation that ensued may be surmised from the following history.

Old Hardpiece, grumbling the greater part of the way, led his companion through a labyrinth of stairs and passages to a small room, where a huge flagon of ale, with cold beef and other substantial articles for breakfast were about being displayed. Anthony, nothing loth, threw aside his cap and unbraced his girdle, for the more capacious disposal of such savoury and delicious viands. A heavy pull at the tankard again brought out Master Geoffery's deep-mouthed oratory. Anthony's tongue grew more nimble as his appetite waxed less vigorous ; he asked many questions about the business which required their presence at Raven Castle in such haste.

" The orphan children of Sir Henry Fairfax are to be conveyed to some place of concealment for a short period. Master says he has had intimation of a design on the part of the late Sir Henry's friends to seize them

perforce. Which act of violence Hildebrand Wentworth, being left as their sole guardian, will make all haste to prevent."

"The children of the late Sir Henry Fairfax, who was killed in the wars?" inquired Anthony.

"Ay, ay. Poor things! since their mother drowned herself——"

Old Hardpiece here looked round, as though fearing some intrusion. He continued in an undertone:

"Goody Shelton says she walks in the forest; and that her wraith so frightened Humphrey's horse that it would not budge a straw's breadth, just beside the great oak in the Broad Holm, before you get into the forest on the other side towards Slaidburn."

Anthony was, at this precise moment, cramming the last visible remains of a goose-pie into the same place where he had before deposited half the good things on the table, anointing his beard with their savoury outskirts—when suddenly his chin dropped, his face assumed a sort of neutral tinge, and his whole form appeared to grow stiff with terror. He made several efforts to speak; but the following words only could be distinguished:

"I was sure it would be a ghost!"

"What!—a ghost!—Where!" anxiously inquired Geoffery.

"Just by the great oak in the Broad Holm, on the other side of the forest."

"What was it like?"

"I cannot tell; and Michael pretended he did not see it!"

"Thou canst surely show the appearance it put on."

"Something, as it might be, like unto a woman, crossed our path twice, and within a stone's throw. O Master Geoffery, we be dead men!"

Another groan here interrupted their discourse. Master Hardpiece muttered some unintelligible prayers, putting on a face of great solemnity. Several minutes

elapsed, while the following exclamations rapidly succeeded each other :

" A ghost !—save us !—a very ghost ! I'll not to Slaidburn again without help. Another draught, Anthony ; a stiffener to thy courage, mayhap. It's now daylight, though," said he, looking through the casement, " and most of us fear only what may be felt, in the daytime at any rate."

Anthony took the cup, and, apparently without being aware, drank off the contents. He was much invigorated by the draught, which seemed to invest him with new courage ; partly from the recollection that a long daylight would intervene between the beginning and the end of his journey, and partly because of the sudden rush of spirits to his brain. He arose, and, assuming a posture more erect, planted his cap in a becoming attitude, whilst Geoffery was putting aside the empty vessels into a sort of large wooden chalice, for the purpose of a more convenient removal.

Light steps were now heard bounding along the passage, and the door was suddenly burst open by two rosy-cheeked children; the elder a boy of some four or five years' growth, and his sister scarcely a twelvemonth younger.

" Master Geoffery, Master Geoffery," lisped one laughing urchin, " hide me ; there is Alice—she'll not let me go. We are to ride on two great horses ; and I shall have a sword, and sister Julia a coach."

Here nurse Alice made her appearance. She had been weeping : tears and entreaties were vain. She asked permission to accompany them ; but with a frown Hildebrand Wentworth had chidden her from his presence. Since the loss of their mother, and almost from the time that news had arrived of their father's death, which happened a little while before the birth of Julia, she had borne a mother's part to her little charge ; and had it been allowed her, she would gladly have served them without reward.

Fearful of leaving them, she had followed hastily into the room. With a searching glance she eyed the stranger for a while; then suddenly turning to the children, she addressed them with great seriousness and affection.

"Harry, you have not repeated your prayer this morning. Do you think God will take care of you to-day if you ask Him not?"

Here the rebuked boy grew silent; and with a suffused face ran to his nurse. Whilst in her lap he poured out his morning orison. It was a simple but affecting request. Julia knelt also; and Alice, laying a hand on each, blessed the children.

"God of their fathers, I commit them to Thy care!"

She could say no more; loud sobs checked her utterance; but leaning over these little ones, she convulsively clasped them in her embrace.

Old Hardpiece grew unusually busy about matters of no importance, and the hard-featured trooper was seen to brush his brows, as though some unpleasant suspicions had crossed his brain. He raised his arm as he gazed on the children, muttering as he clenched his hand:

"If he dare!"—He then carelessly examined his sword, returning it quickly into its sheath, as the weeping Alice drew away the children to her own apartment. Old Geoffery now grew more talkative. Leaning his chin upon his hand, and his elbow on the table, he thus proceeded:

"It's four long years come St. Barnabas since Sir Harry's death; and my lady, rest her soul! went melancholy soon after. Everything was bequeathed in trust to my master, Hildebrand Wentworth, a great friend of Sir Harry's, and his secretary or purse-bearer, I forget which—no matter—all the property, I say, was left in trust for Sir Harry's wife and children. Hildebrand brought a will from Sir Harry to this effect, and poor Lady Fairfax never looked up afterwards. She

moped about, and would see nobody, and then it was they said she was out of her wits. It was not long before her head-gear and mantle were found by the river-side just below the old bridge you crossed—but her body never."

Here the entrance of Michael cut short the old man's discourse.

"Belike thou hast not lacked a cup of warm sack and a whey-posset with my master in the west turret," scoffingly cried Master Geoffery. Michael looked surly as he replied:

"Old Gabergeon, let us have a draught of thy best—a stirrup-cup. Breakfast I have settled with above stairs."

"Marry take your swill, Mr. Saucypate," tartly replied Geoffery. "And so, because you have eaten and drunk with my master, it is 'old Gabergeon'; else had it been good Master Hardpiece, or 'if you will, Master Geoffery!' Out upon such carrion, say I, that think themselves live meat when they are but fly-blown."

"Old Geoffery," said Michael, coolly, "we'll settle our rank at a more convenient opportunity. Just now I'll thank thee for the flagon."

"It's in the cupboard," growled Hardpiece. "Verily these arms would tingle. But I am old, and that same Michael but a sorry brute—no beating would mend him. An ass of most vicious propensities; he will bite forwards and kick backwards. Friends get the benefit of his teeth, and foes the favour of his heels."

Thus did the old man console himself for the rudeness he could not restrain. It was not long ere a summons hurried them to the courtyard. They found their beasts equipped and ready to depart; Harry and Julia looking joyously on, vastly diverted with the horses' accoutrements. Hildebrand stood by the gateway, looking moody and anxious for their departure; Alice, full of sorrow, attended with some refreshments which

were stowed into the wallet. The journey was but short, and an hour's ride that fine morning, Michael said, would bring them to their destination. Hildebrand forbade him to mention the place where he wished to conceal the children, lest it should be known to their iniquitous relatives. Each horseman, with a child mounted before him, slowly passed the outer court, at the entrance of which Alice disappeared. The iron tramp of the steeds rang shrilly from underneath the arched gateway ; Hildebrand stood by the platform ; he bade them good speed. Anthony passed first ; Michael checked his horse for a moment, when Hildebrand took the hand of the boy, and pressed it ; but one portentous look, as at the recognition of some sinister purpose, passed between Michael and the old man, unobserved by his colleague. Hildebrand raised his hand above his mouth, and slowly whispered :

" Remember !—the gulf underneath the waterfall."

The horsemen departed. Passing the bridge, they were just rising over the green slope when the children recognized Alice upon her mistress's palfrey. They screamed out loudly to her ; but she was riding in a contrary direction, and soon passed out of their sight.

The narrow glades of the forest suddenly encompassed them. The morning was pretty far advanced ; the merry birds twittered in their dun covert, brushing the dewdrops from the boughs with their restless wings. The thrush and blackbird poured forth a more melancholy note ; whilst the timid rabbit, scared from his morning's meal, rushed by and sought his burrow. The wood grew thicker, and the sunbeams that shot previously in broad slopes across their path soon became as lines of intensely-chequered light piercing the grim shadows beneath. The trees, too, put on a more sombre character ; and the sward appeared choked with rank and noxious weeds. It seemed a path rarely trod, and only to be recognized by occasional openings through the underwood.

They travelled for some hours. Michael had taken the lead, and Anthony with his prattling charge rode carelessly on. Looking round, the latter suddenly checked his horse. A momentary alarm overspread his features as he cried :

" Michael, you have surely mistaken the path ; an hour's ride should have brought us to the end of our journey, and our beasts have been footing it on since morning."

" Heed not, comrade ; thou wilt soon find we have the right track before us. We shall be through the wood presently."

" Why, this is the road to Ingleton, if I mistake not ; I hear the roar of the Greta."

" Right—we shall be on our road to the old castle shortly."

They travelled on more silently than before, until the brawling of the torrent they had heard for some time increased with rapid intensity. The road now widening, Anthony spurred on his beast by the side of his companion, who slackened his pace to afford an opportunity for further parley.

" Whither are we bound ? " inquired Anthony.

" Where the children will be well cared for."

A dubious expression of countenance, which Anthony but too well understood, accompanied these words ; and villain was expressed by indications too unequivocal to be easily mistaken through every change and inflection of his visage. Anthony, though not of the most unsullied reputation, and probably habituated to crimes at which humanity might shudder, pressed the little victim closer to his breast. The prattle of the babe had won his heart ; and the morning scene with Alice had softened his spirit, so that he could have wept when he thought of the remorseless nature of his comrade, to whose care the children were entrusted.

The roar of the torrent grew louder. Suddenly they entered upon a sort of irregular amphitheatre—woods

rising above each other to the very summit of the hills by which they were surrounded. A swollen waterfall was visible, below which a bare and flattened trunk, whose boughs had apparently been but just lopped, was thrown across the torrent. A ruined keep or donjon was seen above a line of dark firs, crowning the summit of a steep crag that rose abruptly from the river.

"This is our half-way house," said Michael, pointing to the grim fortress: "the children are tired, and have need of refreshment. Tarry here with the horses whilst I carry them over the bridge."

"We have refreshments in the wallet—what need we to loiter yonder?" replied Anthony, eyeing the other with an expression of distrust.

"The children want rest," said Michael, "and we shall there find shelter from the heat."

"If rest be needful," was the reply, "surely this dry sward and these overhanging leaves will afford both rest and shelter."

"The children are in my keeping," said Michael fiercely, "and I am not to account with thee for my proceedings. Alight, and give me the child."

"I will not!—Michael, I have watched thee, and I know that thou art a villain. Ay, draw; I have weapons, too, comrade."

Fast and furious grew the combat, during which the terrified children made the woods echo with their shrieks. The result was not long doubtful. Michael soon proved himself the better swordsman; and his antagonist, stumbling from fatigue, broke his own weapon in the fall. Defenceless and exposed, the uplifted sword of his adversary was raised for his destruction, when suddenly the arm of the ruffian was arrested, the weapon snatched from his grasp, and a female figure habited in a dark and coarse vestment stood between the combatants. Her brow was bare, and her dark, full eye beamed on them with a look of pity and of anger. Her naturally pale cheek was flushed; but it

betrayed not the agitation she endured. Erect and unbending she stood before them, and the quailing miscreant crouched at her feet.

"Away to thy master!—thy blood, too worthless even for thine own steel——"

She hurled away the weapon as she spoke.

Burning with revenge at his late defeat, Anthony flew after the falling brand: seizing it, he renewed the attack. Michael fled towards the bridge. With the bound of a bereaved tiger Anthony sprung upon his prey. Just where the root of the trunk rested on the bank they closed, after a desperate lunge parried by the unprotected arm of Michael. It was disabled—but he still clung to his enemy. Anthony strove to disengage himself; but the other, aware that life or death depended on the issue of that struggle, hung on him with a convulsive tightness that rendered the advantage he had gained of no avail. The sword was useless. Anthony threw it into the boiling gulf at his feet. Both hands being now free, whilst one arm of his opponent hung powerless and bleeding at his side, he had greatly the advantage. He wrenched the other arm of Michael from its hold, lifted him from his narrow footing-place, and with a malignant shout of triumph shook him over the abyss. One startling plunge, and the wretch sank in the rolling waters. An agonizing yell, and but one, escaped him, as he hung quivering over that yawning portal of eternity; the next cry was choked by the seethe of the boiling foam. The waves whirled him round for a moment like some huge leviathan tossing its prey. He sank into its gorge, and the insatiate gulf swallowed him up for ever. Anthony drew back. He turned from the horrid scene, with some yet lingering tokens of compunction, in the expectation of rejoining his companions; but in vain—the babes and his deliverer had disappeared!

Hildebrand Wentworth had passed the remainder of that day in his own chamber. It was a dark lone room,

leading out of the turret we have before described. Often had he ascended the narrow stair communicating with the parapet, and often had he watched the dark woods beneath the distant mountain. It was the road taken by his guilty emissaries; and, whether on the look-out for signals or for their return, he repeated his visits until the blue mists were gathering on the horizon, and day—another day!—had passed into the bosom of eternity. It was an hour of holiness and peace, but heavy and disturbed was the current of his thoughts. He sat near a projecting angle of the turret, his head bent over the parapet. A female voice was heard beneath, chanting monotonously a low and melancholy psalm. Soon the following words were distinguished:

"Dark as the bounding waters
When storm-clouds o'er them roll,
The face of Zion's daughters
Reveals the troubled soul."

Hildebrand drew his breath, as if labouring under some violent emotion. His whole frame was agitated. His lip grew pale as she went on with a voice of exultation:

"But joy is sown in sadness,
And hope with anxious fears;
Yon clouds shall break in gladness,
And doubts dissolve in tears."

Fiends increase their torments at the sight of heaven! Hildebrand threw back his cloak—with one clenched hand he struck his forehead, and with a loud groan he rushed from the spot. He sought rest in the gloom and solitude of his chamber; but hours passed on, during which the conscience-stricken culprit endured the horrors of accumulated guilt. Sometimes he opened the casement, gazing on the dark heavens, until he thought they were peopled, and he held converse with unseen and terrible things. Inarticulate murmurs broke from

his lips. A few words might occasionally be distinguished—" Murder !—An old man, too—Thy children —they are at rest ! " A gleam of pleasure passed over his haggard features.

" I am now "—looking round—" now master of all."

" All ? " breathed a low voice in the chamber.

The cringing wretch was speechless. Sense almost forsook him : horror fastened on his spirit, while he turned his eyes, as if by some resistless constraint, towards the place from whence the voice had issued. Near his couch was a curiously-wrought cabinet inlaid with ivory and gems of the most costly workmanship. An heir-loom of the house, it was highly valued, and tradition reports that it was one of those spoils on which our forefathers cast a longing glance in the wars of the Holy Sepulchre. Be this as it may, every document of value connected with the family was here deposited. By virtue of the power given to him from the dying Sir Henry, though ostensibly for the benefit of his lady and her infant offspring, Hildebrand guarded the trust with a jealous eye. No one had access to it but himself, nor did he permit any other person than old Geoffery, the house-steward, to visit his chamber.

Before his cabinet stood a figure enveloped in a dark robe. Pale, deadly pale, were the features, though scarcely discernible in their form and outline. The lamp burnt dimly ; but with the quickened apprehension of guilt he recognized the wan resemblance of Lady Fairfax !

A cry of exhausted anguish escaped him, and he fell senseless on the floor.

Morning had risen, casting its bright and cheerful rays into the chamber, ere Hildebrand Wentworth awoke. Consciousness but slowly returned, and the events of the preceding hours came like shadows upon his soul. He stamped thrice, and immediately the vapid countenance of Geoffery Hardpiece was before him.

"Come hither, Hardpiece. I am wondrous heavy and ill at ease."

"Why, master, your bed has not been disturbed these two nights. How should there be anything but an aching head, and complaining bones, when——"

Hildebrand cast a hasty and confused glance towards the couch as he replied:

"I have matters of moment just now that weigh heavily on my spirit. I cannot——"

Here was a short pause; he continued, with a slow and tremulous accent:

"I hope the children are safe."

"Why, master," said Geoffery, "you have sent them out of harm's way, I hope; but—I know not what ails me—an uneasy night of it I have had about them."

"What hast thou seen?" eagerly demanded Hildebrand.

"Seen! I have seen nothing, but I have been haunted at all quarters by a vast crowd of vexatious busy dreams—about cut-throats and murderers."

"Who says murderer?—I will have thee in the stocks."

Hildebrand attempted to lay hold on him as he spoke; but, accustomed to these outbreaks of temper, Master Hardpiece merely stepped on one side, still maintaining his usual forward and self-sufficient demeanour.

"Mr. Hildebrand Wentworth, when an old servant——"

"Peace!" interrupted his master—"I am chafed beyond endurance." He struck his forehead violently, but suddenly recollecting himself, he seized Geoffery by the arm.

"What sawest thou last night, knave?"

"Only dreams, master—but——"

"Say on—what makes thee hesitate?"

"A messenger arrived last night."

"A messenger!—from whence?" eagerly demanded Hildebrand.

"Unluckily," said Geoffery, "it was shortly after you had retired for the night; I durst not then trouble you with the message. Marry, it's not the sort of news one likes to be in a hurry to tell."

"Go on, varlet."

"Why," continued the provoking simpleton, looking as if he had to reveal unpleasant tidings, and drawing back as he spoke, "the bearer is in the train of some herald or pursuivant, come from o'er sea to our court, about exchange of prisoners and the like. This man has a message from Sir Henry Fairfax."

"He lies! I'll have his tongue bored!" furiously cried Hildebrand.

"Nay, but listen: he says Sir Henry, whom we all thought dead, is now alive, and a prisoner in some ugly old German fortress."

During this recital the astonished Hildebrand clenched his hands, with a look of awful and impotent rage. Hardpiece continued:

"This coxcomb says he was sent specially by Sir Henry to obtain from you some papers of great moment, which will ensure his immediate release. He bears Sir Henry's signet, and the knave hath no lack of assurance."

"Has this fellow had any communication with the menials, Geoffery?—or hast thou done me the service to keep him and his message to thyself?" anxiously inquired Hildebrand.

"Why, as touching that, Alice, somehow or other—for these women are always looking to anybody's business but their own—wormed out his message in part, before I was aware of her drift."

"Alice!—Again has that viper crossed my path?—Bid the messenger attend."

When Geoffery returned he was followed by a short, muscular-looking personage, attired in a foreign garb. A military cloak, and slouched hat, garnished with a broad band and feather, gave him altogether an air

of importance which his bare exterior had not sustained. On entering he made a slight obeisance. Hildebrand watched his bearing, as if he would have searched him to the heart's core. Not in the least disconcerted, the soldier threw himself on a seat. Preliminaries were waived by this unceremonious guest, who, speaking evidently in a foreign accent, began the interrogatory as follows :

" You were the private secretary of Sir Henry Fairfax ? "

" I was," briefly replied Hildebrand.

" Know you this signet ? "

" I do," again he sullenly answered.

" It was given into my keeping," said the stranger, " as a token whereby Hildebrand Wentworth should, in the due exercise of his fealty and trust, commit to my charge certain documents that shall immediately be set forth. But first, and briefly, it may be needful to relate the manner in which Sir Henry recovered after your departure. On the day following the skirmish, wherein Sir Henry was supposed to be mortally wounded, he gave unto you, as his most valued and bosom friend, those solemn credentials, by which, as a dying man, he invested you with full powers to proceed to England, as the sole guardian and protector of his beloved wife, and their infant offspring. The goods and effects of which he died the possessor were vested in your name, I believe, in trust for her benefit and the surviving children. I think I am right in this ? In case of her death, though, I believe the property became yours."

" It did."

" Such was the nature of the wound that his physicians believed a few hours only could intervene before his dissolution. He urged your immediate departure. Shortly afterwards the whole camp equipage, together with the sick and wounded, fell into the hands of his enemies. Driven off to a considerable distance up the

Rhine at full speed, and without any other comforts or necessaries than what his captors could supply, his wounds bleeding afresh, and every limb racked with pain, to the astonishment of all he speedily recovered; and from that time he has remained a close prisoner in the fortress. Not receiving any tidings from his native shores, he knows not his loss. Yesternight only I heard of Lady Fairfax's most lamentable decease. In a cartel lately arrived for negotiating an exchange of prisoners, Sir Henry sends by me, secretly, as one of the envoys, a requisition for the papers I have before mentioned. His name, by some mistake, perhaps, not being included in the lists for exchange, has induced him so to act. The credentials, which he will thus be enabled through me to present, will doubtless accomplish his release, and restore him to his family and to his home. They are papers of great moment, and will set forth claims which cannot be overlooked; and I have most minute and special instructions to get them laid before the council."

"Where are these precious documents deposited?" said Hildebrand.

"An Eastern cabinet of choice and costly workmanship, containing other records of great value, stands in Sir Henry's private chamber." The envoy looked round, and his eyes rested on the cabinet. "The outer doors being opened, there are seen two ranges of drawers, with their separate mountings and compartments, each containing materials of greater or less moment. Sir Henry was minute in his directions, lest his lady might be absent; and the innermost secrets of this goodly tabernacle not being known, save to themselves, the object of my visit might be retarded. With the permission of Hildebrand Wentworth, I will describe minutely where he may find this deposit."

Hildebrand slightly moved his head, and the speaker continued:

"From Sir Henry's description, and the tracings

which he drew on the floor of his cell, I should conceive that this room contains the object of our search. I will recount the memoranda that I made, lest memory should be unfaithful. When the third cover is unclosed, in the lowest part of the recess on the right hand, beneath a sliding panel, is a spring, on touching which the whole flies back, and discovers a rare device, beautifully wrought in arabesque relief. So far, in all likelihood, you being his confidential secretary, have beheld ? "

" I have seen this cunning work thou speakest of. What more ? "

" Embellishing the four corners thereof is the likeness of a hand, curiously chased in silver ; the second joint on the third finger of the lowest of them, on the left, being pressed, the whole picture, by marvellous sleight and artifice, riseth up, revealing the treasure of which I am in search."

" Hath Sir Henry sent no written message, that we may know his will in this matter ? " inquired Hildebrand.

" It is strictly forbidden to a prisoner," replied the other, " to use tablets ; but my knowledge of the secret is a sufficient safeguard against imposture."

" Retire : I will begin the search with all speed. But hold thyself in readiness for immediate departure. Thou wilt not have the worse thrift for a hasty dismissal."

The stranger withdrew, accompanied by Hardpiece. Hildebrand listened to their retreating footsteps ; when, like unto one possessed, he stamped, and tore his thin grey locks, and cursed—audibly and bitterly cursed—his destiny.

" Hast thou escaped ?—when the draught danced and bubbled over my parched lips. Fate—fortune, whatever thou art, I would curse thee ! "

As he spoke, he lifted up one clenched hand towards heaven, laden with imprecation. And why did not that power, whose vengeance he visibly defied, launch a bolt

against the impious ?—Why not render him, in that very act, a monument of just and righteous retribution ?—"*Shall not the Judge of the whole earth do right ?*" is a master-key that unlocks the mysteries and ministrations of Divine Providence, however complicated in their nature and obscure in their design.

As the hoary sinner withdrew his hand, suddenly the muscles of his face relaxed ; a ray of hope had irradiated his spirit—a gleam of delight passed over his pale features. He grew calm, and with a firm step he strode across the apartment. He approached the cabinet.

"Thou shalt not escape me now !"—As he said this, he threw open the doors. Hildebrand had often searched this depository, but the place of concealment pointed out by the stranger had hitherto escaped his notice. He soon detected the stratagem—the lid flew back ; but the papers of which he was in search were gone !

The spirit of mischief was again foiled, but his evil genius did not forsake him. He set down, and, for purposes of the blackest malignity, forged a series of evidences—a development of plans and proceedings that would at once have branded Sir Henry as a coward and a traitor. These letters he sealed up, and calling for the messenger, committed the packet into his hands.

"You have Sir Henry's orders to lay these before the king ?" said Hildebrand.

"I have," replied the envoy.

"Then hasten to court, and so good speed. Stay—when you meet Sir Henry Fairfax, offer him an old man's sympathy and condolence. Break the matter to him tenderly—and when he returns—I say no more. Away, thy mission hath need of despatch."

The soldier made a slight inclination of the head as he departed.

Hildebrand Wentworth sat down to reap the fruits of his villainy—a harvest of his own planting. The full fruition of it he now seemed ready to enjoy ; but days and weeks passed by, and still found him feverish

and anxious. The fate of the children—whether the work of destruction had or had not been accomplished —was still to him a matter of uncertainty. He had often sent in search of the ruffians, but they had not been seen at their usual haunts. Guilt whispered that all was not complete. Restless and oppressed by undefined and terrible apprehensions, he resolved to end his doubts, and, if possible, procure an interview. He expected to obtain some clue to their proceedings by a visit to the tower.

It was not far from the close of a bright summer's day when he gained the rude bridge below the waterfall. He shuddered as he looked on the narrow trunk and the ever-tossing gulf beneath. The blackness of darkness was upon his spirit, and he ran as if some demon had pursued him, climbing with almost breathless haste the steep and winding staircase that gave access from the bridge to the ruined fortress above.

From the platform a narrow ledge of rock led to the ditch, now dry, and nearly filled with fragments from the ruins. He passed the tottering arch of the portcullis ;—long weeds choked up the entrance, waving drearily as the light breeze went over them. Hildebrand heard not the moan of the coming blast. Evening approached, and a thousand shadows haunted him—grim spectres that crossed his path, crowding upon him with anger and menace. From a ruined doorway he ascended a narrow stair, and had penetrated far into the interior of that part of the castle which, in some measure, remained entire, when, for the first time, he seemed startled into a consciousness of his situation. It was an appalling scene of solitude and decay. The realities, to which he almost instantaneously awoke, might have awed a less guilty spirit than that which inhabited the bosom of Hildebrand Wentworth. A long gallery, supported by huge pillars, terminated in the distance by a long and narrow oriel. On each side, broken but richly-variegated windows threw down a

PUBLIC
DEPTFORD

many-tinted light, which, oppressed by the dark and caverned arches, gave a strange and mysterious character to the grotesque reflections hovering on the floor. Narrow streams of light flitted across the dense vapours, visible only in their gleam. Involuntarily did Hildebrand pass on: impelled as if by some unseen but resistless power, he durst not retrace his footsteps. His tread was slow and fearful, as he traversed the long and dreary vista. Every sense was now in full exercise;—his faculties becoming more acute by the extremity of terror he endured. His ear caught the slightest sound—his eye, the least motion that glimmered across his path. Sometimes a terrific shape seemed to glide past: he brushed the cold and clammy damps from his brow, and it vanished.

Suddenly a door opened at the extremity of the gallery, and a faint light streamed from the crevice. Voices—children's voices—were heard in the chamber. He rushed onward. Rage frantic and uncontrolled, possessed him, as he beheld the babes, the intended victims of his avarice, in all the bloom of health and innocence, unconscious of danger, bounding through the apartment, together with their nurse and protector, Alice! Goaded by his insatiate tormentor, he drew a poniard from his vest, and rushed on the unoffending objects of his hate. Alice shrieked; she attempted to throw herself between them and their foe, but was too far off to accomplish her purpose. His arm was too sure, and his stroke too sudden. But ere the steel could pierce his victims it was arrested. He looked round, and a female figure, loosely enveloped in a dark cloak, had rescued them from death. It was the same form that had before interposed between them and the fangs of their remorseless enemy. Loosened by the sudden spring, her garment flew aside. Hildebrand gazed silently, but with a look of horror, too wild and intense to be portrayed. He seemed to recognize the intruder—his lips moved rapidly while he spoke.

"Thee!—whom the waves had swallowed! Have the waters given up their dead?"—he faintly exclaimed, almost gasping for utterance.

"Monster! canst thou look upon this form," she cried, "and not wither at the sight? But I have done," she meekly continued: "Heaven hath yet a blessing for the innocent;—but thy cup of iniquity is full. Thy doom is at hand. I have trusted Thee, O my Father; and I trust Thee still!"

It was the much injured and persecuted wife of Sir Henry Fairfax who now stood before the abashed miscreant.

"Away!" she cried; "to Heaven I leave my vengeance and thy crime. Hence—to thy home! Thine, did I say? Soon, monster, shalt thou be chased from thy lair, and the wronged victim regain his right."

Hildebrand, awed and confounded, retraced his path, brooding over some more cunning stratagem to ensure his prey. He had passed the bridge, and, on attempting to remount his steed, his attention was directed to a cloud of dust, and a pale flash of arms in the evening light. Two horsemen drew nigh—their steeds studded with gouts of foam, and in an instant one of them alighted before the traitor. It was Sir Henry Fairfax. "Have I caught thee?" cried the knight—"What mischief art thou here a-perpetrating?—Seize that villain!"

In a moment, Hildebrand was denied all chance of escape.

"Thy machinations are defeated—thy villainies revealed, and vengeance demands a hasty recompense."

Hildebrand prostrated himself on the ground in the most abject humiliation, and besought mercy.

"I will not harm thee, wretch," exclaimed the gallant knight: "to a higher power I leave the work of retribution. The ministers of justice await thee at my

castle. I came hither first to seek my wife!—Lead the way; thou shalt be witness to our meeting—wife, children, all. Our bliss will to thee be misery that the most refined tortures would not inflict. On —on."

Hildebrand, with imbecile agony, grasped at the very stones for succour. He then rushed towards the bridge, and, ere his purpose could be anticipated, with one yell, precipitated himself into the waters!

A few lines will suffice by way of explanation to this unlooked-for termination of their sufferings.

When Lady Fairfax fled from the castle, in order to elude his search—for Hildebrand had the audacity to threaten by force to make her his wife—she threw off her cloak and head-dress, laying them on the river's brink that it might appear as though she had accomplished her own destruction. To the care of the faithful Alice she had committed her children, and likewise the secret of her concealment. Alice was in continual correspondence with her unfortunate mistress; and great was the joy and exultation with which she communicated the arrival of a messenger from her lord, whom she had long mourned as dead. Providentially, no interview took place between Hildebrand and the stranger on the night of his arrival; and sufficient time intervened to enable Lady Fairfax to make a desperate attempt, in the hope of gaining possession of the papers for which he had been sent. She well knew Hildebrand would not relinquish the possession of credentials that might ensure his lord's return. It was Lady Fairfax who had alarmed him the same night by her appearance in his chamber. She hoped to have found him asleep; but was enabled to get possession of the writings through his timidity and surprise. With these she met the envoy, as he was returning from the castle. Disclosing all the tortuous and daring villainy of Hildebrand, she committed the real documents to his care, instructing him at the same time to lay before

her sovereign the narrative of her wrongs. Soon was the captivity of Sir Henry terminated ; and joy, heightened by recollection of the past, and chastened by the severity of their misfortunes, attended them through the remainder of their earthly career.

THE PHANTOM VOICE

" He heerde a sunde but noughte he zee,
No touche upon his fleshe ther came ;
Bot a swedderin winde smote heavilee,
And heavilee brenn'd the fleckerin' flame."

Old Ballad.

The following tradition, like some of the preceding legends, has been found, under various modifications and disguises, connected with local scenery, and attaching itself in the mind of the hearer to well-known places and situations with which he may have been familiar.

Southport, a bathing-place of great resort, on the Lancashire coast, has been pointed out as the scene of the following tragedy, which probably occurred long before its salubrity and convenience for sea-bathing had rendered this barren tract of sand the site of a populous and thriving hamlet. From the mildness and congeniality of the air to persons of weak and relaxed habits, it has been not inaptly termed " The Montpelier of England."

" But the coast is probably as dangerous for shipping as any round the kingdom. The sandbanks extend in a north-westerly direction for at least six miles, so as to render the navigation extremely difficult even to the natives, and impracticable for strangers. Hence shipwrecks are very frequent " ; and " in a coming tide, accompanied by a strong westerly wind, it is almost impossible for boats to put off or to live in the sea.

" It not unfrequently happens that these accidents occur in the night-time, in very hazy weather, or at ebb tide. In the latter case it is necessary for boats to be taken in carts over the sands down to low-water mark, before any assistance can be attempted.

" If the captain of the vessel be obstinate, and trust to his

own skill, he increases the danger. When the crews of the vessels take to their own boats, and disobey the directions of the Southport pilots, their jeopardy is tenfold greater, and their loss almost inevitable."*

Nearly one hundred vessels have been wrecked on this coast within the last thirty years, and more than half of them totally lost. Of these calamities the particulars are upon record. Which of them may have given rise to the events here detailed we have no means of ascertaining.

It was at the close of a bright and memorable evening in October that I had carelessly flung the reins upon the neck of my horse, as I traversed the bare and almost interminable sands skirting the Lancashire coast.

On my right a succession of low sand-hills, drifted by the partial and unsteady blasts, skirted the horizon —their summits strongly marked upon the red and lowering sky in an undulating and scarcely-broken outline. Behind them I heard the vast and busy waters rolling on, like the voice of the coming tempest. Here and there some rude and solitary hut rose above the red hillocks, bare and unprotected: no object of known dimensions being near by which its true magnitude might be estimated, the eye seemed to exaggerate its form upon the mind in almost gigantic proportions. As twilight drew on, the deception increased; and, starting occasionally from the influence of some lacerating thought, I beheld, perchance, some huge and turreted fortress, or a pile of misshapen battlements, rising beyond the hills like the grim castles of romance, or the air-built shadows of fairy-land. . . . Night was fast closing; I was alone, out of the beaten track, amidst a desert and thinly-inhabited region; a perfect stranger, I had only the superior sagacity of my steed to look to for safety and eventual extrication from this perilous labyrinth.

The way, if such it might be called, threading the

* Glazebrook's Southport.

mazes through a chain of low hills, and consisting only of a loose and ever-shifting bed of dry sand, grew every moment more and more perplexed. Had it been daylight, there appeared no object by which to direct my course—no mark that might distinguish whether or not my path was in a right line or a circle : I seemed to be rambling through a succession of amphitheatres formed by the sand-hills, every one so closely resembling its neighbour that I could not recognize any decided features on which to found that distinction of ideas which philosophers term individuality. In almost any other mood of the mind this would have been a puzzling and disagreeable dilemma ; but at that moment it appeared of the least possible consequence to me where the dark labyrinth might terminate.

Striving to escape from thought, from recollection, the wild and cheerless monotony of my path seemed to convey a desperate stillness to the mind, to quench in some measure the fiery outburst of my spirit. It was but a deceitful calm—the deadening lull of spent anguish : I awoke to a keener sense of misery, from which there was no escape.

But it was not to lament over my own griefs that I commenced my story. Let the dust of oblivion cover them ; I would not pain another by the recital. There are sorrows—short ages of agony—into the dark origin of which none would dare to pry : one heart alone feels, hides, and nourishes them for ever !

Night now came on, heavy and dark ; not a star twinkled above me , I seemed to have left the habitations of men. In whatever direction I turned not a light was visible ; all fellowship with my kind had vanished. No sound broke the unvarying stillness but the heavy plunge of my horse's feet and the hollow moan of the sea. Gradually I began to rouse from my stupor : awaking, as from a dream, my senses grew rapidly conscious of the perils by which I was surrounded. I knew not but some hideous gulf awaited

me, or the yawning sea, towards which I fancied my course tended, was destined to terminate this adventure. It was chiefly, however, a feeling of loneliness, a dread, unaccountable in its nature, that seemed to haunt me. There was nothing so very uncommon or marvellous in my situation ; yet the horror I endured is unutterable.

The demon of fear seemed to possess my frame, and benumbed every faculty. I saw, or thought I saw, shapes hideous and indistinct rising before me, but so rapidly that I could not trace their form ere they vanished. I felt convinced it was the mind that was perturbed, acting outwardly upon the senses, rendered more than usually irritable by the alarm and excitation they had undergone—yet I could not shake off the spell. I heard a sharp rustling past my ear ; I involuntarily raised my hand ; but nothing met my touch save the damp and chilly hair about my temples. I tried to rally myself out of these apprehensions, but in vain : reason has little chance of succeeding when fear has gained the ascendency. I durst not quicken my pace lest I should meet with some obstruction, judging it most prudent to allow my steed to grope out his path in the way best suited to his own sagacity. Suddenly he made a dead halt. No effort or persuasion could induce him to stir. I was the more surprised from knowing his generally docile and manageable temper. He seemed immovable, and, moreover, as I thought, in the attitude of listening. I, too, listened eagerly—intensely ; my senses sharpened to the keenest perception of sound.

The moan of the sea came on incessantly as before ; no other sound could be distinguished. Again I tried to urge him forward ; but the attempt was fruitless. I now fancied that there might be some dangerous gulf or precipice just at his feet, and that the faithful animal was unwilling to plunge himself and his rider into immediate destruction. I dismounted, and with the bridle at arm's length, carefully stepped forward a few paces, but I could find no intimation of danger ;

the same deep and level bed of sand seemed to continue onwards, without any shelving or declivity whatever. Was the animal possessed? He still refused to proceed, but the cause remained inscrutable. A sharp and hasty snort, with a snuffing of the wind in the direction of the sea, now pointed out the quarter towards which his attention was excited. His terror seemed to increase, and with it my own. I knew not what to anticipate. He evidently began to tremble, and again I listened.

Fancy plays strange freaks, or I could have imagined there was something audible through the heavy booming of the sea—a more distinct, and, as it were, articulate sound—though manifestly at a considerable distance. There was nothing unusual in this—perhaps the voice of the fisherman hauling out his boat or of some mariner heaving the anchor. But why such terror betrayed by the irrational brute, and apparently proceeding from this source? for it was manifest that some connection existed between the impulses of the sound now undulating on the wind, and the alarm of my steed. The cause of all this apprehension soon grew more unequivocal—it was evidently approaching. From the sea there seemed to come, at short intervals, a low and lengthened shout, like the voice of one crying out for help or succour. Presently the sounds assumed a more distinct and definite articulation. "Murder!—Murder!" were the only words that were uttered, but in a tone and with an expression of agony I shall never forget. It was not like anything akin to humanity, but an unearthly, and, if I may so express it, a sepulchral shriek—like a voice from the grave.

I crept closer to my steed: nature, recoiling from contact with the approaching phantom, prompted me thus intuitively to cling to anything that had life. I felt a temporary relief, even from the presence of the terrified beast, though I could distinctly perceive him shuddering, yet fixed to the spot. The voice now came on rapidly; it was but a few paces distant. I felt as

SOUTH PORT.

though I was the sport and prey of thoughts too horrible for utterance. Alone, I had to cope with the Evil One; —or I was already, perhaps, the victim of some diabolical agency. The yell was close upon my ear; I felt the clammy breath of the grave across my face, and the sound swept by. It slowly arose;—but the agony of the cry was more intense—more sharp and vehement the shriek of "Murder!" Grown bolder, or perhaps more desperate, I cried out, "Where, in the name of——?" I had scarcely uttered the words when a loud rushing cleft the air, and a crash followed, as though some heavy body had fallen at my feet. The horse burst from its bonds, galloping from me at full speed, and I stood alone! In this appalling extremity, I approached the object of my fears. I bent to the ground; stretching out my hand, my fingers rested on the cold and clammy features of a corpse! I well remember the deep groan that burst from my lips;—nature had reached the extremity of endurance — I felt a sudden rush of blood to the heart, and fell beside my ghastly companion, equally helpless and insensible.

I have no means of ascertaining the duration of this swoon; but, with returning recollection, I again put out my hand, which rested on the cold and almost naked carcase beside me. I felt roused by the touch, and started to my feet—the moon at this instant, emerging from a mass of dark clouds, streamed full on the dead body, pale and blood-stained, the features distorted, as if by some terrible death. Fear now prompted me to fly: I ran as if the wind had lent me wings—not daring to look back, lest my eyes should again rest on the grisly form I had just left. I fled onwards for some time; the moon now enabling me to follow the beaten track, which, to my great joy, brought me suddenly, at the turn of a high bank, within sight of a cheerful fire gleaming through a narrow door, seemingly the entrance to some wayside tavern. Bursts

of hilarity broke from the interior ; the voice of revelry and mirth came upon my ear, as though I was just awakening from a dream. It was as if I had heard the dead laugh in their cold cerements. As I stepped across the threshold, the boisterous roar of mirth made me shudder ; and it seemed, by the alarm visible in the countenance of the guests, that my appearance presented something as terrible to their apprehensions.

Every eye was fixed on me as I seated myself by a vacant table ; and I heard whisperings, with suspicious glances occasionally directed towards the place where I sat. The company, however, soon began to get the better of their consternation, and were evidently not pleased at so unseasonable an interruption to their mirth. I found that some explanation was necessary as to the cause of my intrusion, and with difficulty made them comprehend the nature of my alarm. I craved their assistance for the removal of the body; promising, if possible, to conduct them to the spot where the miserable victim was thrown. They stared at each other during this terrible announcement ; and, at the conclusion, I found everyone giving his neighbour credit for the requisite portion of courage, though himself, at the same time, declining to participate in the hazards of the undertaking.

" Roger towed me 'at he stood i' th' churchyard, wi' shoonbottoms uppermost, looking for the wench he wur to wed through the windows. I'se sure he'll make noa bauk at a bogle."

" Luk thee, Jim, I canna face the dead ; but I wunna show my back to a live fist, the best and the biggest o' the countryside—Wilt' smell, my lad ? "

Roger, mortified at this test of his courage, raised his clenched hand in a half-threatening attitude. A serious quarrel might have ensued, had not a sudden stop been put to the proceedings of the belligerents by an interesting girl stepping before me, modestly inquiring where I had left the corpse ; and offering her-

self as a companion, if these mighty cowards could not muster sufficient courage.

"Shame on thee, Will!" she cried, directing her speech to a young man who sat concealed by the shadow of the projecting chimney;—"shame on thee, I say, to be o'erfaced by two or three hard words. I'se ganging—follow 'at dare."

Saying this, she took down a huge horn lantern, somewhat dilapidated in the outworks, and burnt in various devices, causing a most unprofitable privation of light. A bonnet and cloak, hastily thrown on, completed her costume; and, surrendering the creaking lantern to my care, she stood for a moment contemplating the dingy atmosphere before she stepped forth to depart. During these ominous preparations, a smart sailor-looking man, whose fear of his mistress' displeasure had probably overcome his dread of the supernatural, placed himself between me and the maiden, and taking her by the arm, crustily told me that if I could point out the way, he was prepared to follow;—rather a puzzling matter for a stranger, who scarcely knew whether his way lay right or left from the very threshold. Thus admirably qualified for a guide, I agreed to make the attempt, being determined to spare no pains, in the hope of discovering the object of our search.

Company breeds courage. Several of the guests, finding how matters stood, and that the encounter was not likely to be made single-handed, volunteered their attendance; so that our retinue was shortly augmented to some half-dozen stout fellows. The vanguard was composed of myself and the lovers; the rest crept close in our rear, forming their rank as broad as the nature of the ground would admit.

Luckily I soon found the jutting bank round which I had turned on my first view of the house we had just left. We proceeded in silence—except that a whisper occasionally arose from one of the rearmost individuals talking to his bolder neighbour in front, when finding

his own courage on the wane. Following for some time what appeared to be the traces of recent footsteps, I hoped, yet almost feared, that every moment I might stumble on the bleeding corpse. An attendant in the rear now gave the alarm—something he saw moving on our left causing him to make a desperate struggle to get before his companions. This produced a universal uproar—each fighting for precedency, and thoroughly determined not to be the last. I soon beheld a dark object moving near, and the next minute I was overjoyed to find my recreant steed, quietly searching amongst the tufted moss and sea-reed for a scanty supper. My associates knew not what to make of this discovery. Some of them, I believe, eyed him with deep suspicion ; and more than one glance was given at his hoofs to see if they were not cloven.

Order, however, being re-established, we again set forward with what proved a useful auxiliary to our train. We had not travelled far ere I was again aware of the peculiar snort by which he manifested his alarm ; and it was with difficulty I got him onwards a few paces, when he stood still, his head drawn back, as if from some object that lay in his path. I knew the cause of his terror, and, giving the bridle to one of my attendants, cautiously proceeded, followed by the maiden and her lover ; who, to do him justice, showed a tolerable share of courage—at any rate, in the presence of his mistress. At length I recognized the spot, where, yet unmoved, lay the bleeding carcase. The girl started when she beheld the grim features, horribly drawn together and convulsed, as if in the last agony. I was obliged to muster the requisite fortitude to attempt its removal ; and raising it from the sand, with a little assistance I placed it across the horse, though not without a most determined opposition on the part of the animal. Throwing a cloak over the body, we made the best of our way back ; and on arriving at the house I found that the only vacant apartment where I could deposit

my charge was a narrow loft over the out-house, the entrance to which was both steep and dangerous. With the assistance of my two friends, though with considerable difficulty, it was in the end deposited there, upon a miserable pallet of straw, over which we threw a tattered blanket. On returning, I found the guest-room deserted: the old woman to whom the tavern belonged —the mother, as I afterwards found, of my female companion—was hastily clearing away the drinking utensils, and preparing for an immediate removal to the only apartment above-stairs which bore the honours of the bedchamber. She kindly offered me the use of it for the night; but this sacrifice of comfort I could not allow; and throwing my cloak over a narrow bench, I drew it near the fire, determining to snatch a brief interval of rest, without robbing the good woman and her daughter of their night's repose.

It was now past midnight; sleep was out of the question, as I lay ruminating on the mysterious events of the few past hours. The extraordinary manner in which the murdered wretch had been committed to my care seemed an imperative call upon me to attempt the discovery of some foul and horrible crime. With the returning day I resolved to begin my inquiries, and I vowed to compass sea and land ere I gave up the pursuit. So absorbed was I in the project, that I scarcely noticed the storm, now bursting forth in a continuous roll from the sea, until one wild gust, that seemed to rush by as if it would have swept the dwelling from its seat, put an end to these anticipations. I watched the rattling casement, expecting every moment that it would give way, and the groaning thatch be rent from its hold. Involuntarily I arose and approached the window. It was pitchy dark, and the roar of the sea, under the terrific sweep of the tempest, was truly awful. Never had I heard so terrible a conflict. I knew not how soon I might be compelled to quit this unstable shelter; the very earth shook; and every moment I

expected the frail tenement would be levelled to its foundations. The eddying and unequal pressure of the wind heaped a huge sand-drift against the walls, which probably screened them from the full force of the blast, acting at the same time as a support to their feeble consistency ; sand and earthy matter were driven about and tossed against the casement, insomuch that I almost anticipated a living inhumation. The next gust, however, generally swept off the greater portion of the deposit, making way for a fresh torrent, that poured upon the quaking roof like the rush of a heavy sea over a ship's bulwarks.

I was not destined to be left companionless in the midst of my alarms. The old woman and her daughter, too much terrified to remain quiet, came down from their resting-place, which, being close within the thatch, was most exposed to the tempest. A light was struck, and the dying embers once more kindled into a blaze. The old woman, whom I could not but observe with emotions of awe and curiosity, sat cowering over the flame, her withered hands half-covering her furrowed and haggard cheeks ; a starting gleam occasionally lighted up her grey and wasted locks, which, matted in wild elf-knots, hung about her temples. Occasionally she would turn her head as the wind came hurrying on, and the loud rush of the blast went past the dwelling. She seemed to gaze upon it as though 'twere peopled, and she beheld the " sightless coursers of the air " careering on the storm ; then, with a mutter and a groan, she again covered her face, rocking to and fro to the chant of some wild and unintelligible ditty. Her daughter sat nearly motionless, hearkening eagerly during the short intervals between the gusts ; and as the wind came bellowing on, she huddled closer into the chimney-corner, whither she had crept for protection.

" Such nights are not often known in these parts," said I, taking advantage, as I spoke, of a pause in the

warfare without. The old woman made no answer; but the daughter, bending forwards, replied slowly and with great solemnity: "Mother has seen the death-lights dancing upo' the black scud: some ha' seen the sun sink down upon the waters that winna see him rise again fro' the hill-top."

"Is your mother a seer, then, my pretty maiden?"

"Ye're but a stranger, I guess, if you know not Bridget o' the Sandy Holm—save us! she's hearkening again for the——"

"There!—Once!" The old woman raised her hands as she spoke, and bent her head in an attitude of listening and eager expectation. I listened, too, but could discover no sound, save the heavy swing of the blast, and its receding growl.

"Again!" As she said this, Bridget rose from the low stool she had occupied, and hobbled towards the window. I thought a signal-gun was just then audible, as from some vessel in distress. Ere I could communicate this intelligence, another and a nearer roll silenced all conjecture. It was indeed but too evident that a vessel was in the offing, and rapidly driving towards the shore, from the increasing distinctness of the signals.

Old Bridget stood by the window; her dim and anxious eyes peering through the casement as if she could discern the fearful and appalling spectacle upon the dark billows.

"Your last!—your last, poor wretches!" she cried, when a heavy gust brought another report with amazing distinctness to the ear. "And now the death shriek!—another and another!—ye drop into the deep waters, and the gulf is not gorged with its prey. Bridget Rimmer, girl and woman, has ne'er watched the blue dancers but she has heard the sea-gun follow, and seen the red sand decked with the spoil. Wench, take not of the prey: 'tis accursed!"

The beldame drew back after uttering this anathema, and again resumed her station near the hearth.

The storm now seemed to abate, and as if satisfied with the mischief at this moment consummating, the wind grew comparatively calm. The gusts came by fitfully, like the closing sobs of some fretful and peevish babe, not altogether ceasing with the indulgence of its wishes. As I stood absorbed in a reverie, the nature of which I cannot now accurately determine, the maiden gently touched my arm.

"Sir, will ye walk to the shore? I'se warrant the neighbours are helping, and we may save a life though we canna gie it."

She was wrapped in a thick cloak, the hood thrown forward, and the horn lantern again put in requisition, fitted up for immediate service. We opened the door with considerable difficulty, and waded slowly through the heavy sand-drifts towards the beach. The clouds shattered and driven together in mountainous heaps, were rolling along the sky, a dark scud sweeping over their huge tops, here and there partially illuminated by the moonbeams: the moon was still obscured, but a wild and faint light, usually seen after the breaking up of a storm, just served to show the outline of objects not too remote from our sphere of vision.

My companion soon brought me to an opening in the hills which led directly down to the beach. Immediately I saw lights before us moving to and fro, and the busy hum of voices came upon the wind; forms were indistinctly seen hurrying backward and forward upon the very verge of the white foam boiling from the huge billows. Hastening to the spot, we found a number of fishermen—their wives assisting in the scrutiny—carefully examining the fragments of wreck which the waves were from time to time casting up, and throwing with a heavy lunge upon the shore. Either for purposes of plunder, or for the more ostensible design of contributing to their preservation, sundry packages were occasionally conveyed away, subsequently to an eager examination of their contents. My associate ran into

the thickest of the group, anxiously inquiring as to the fate of the crew, and if any lives had been preserved.

" I guess," cried an old hard-featured sinner, " they be where they'll need no lookin' after. Last brast o' wind, six weeks agone next St. Barnaby, I gied my cabin to the lady and her children—an' the pains I waur like to ha' for my labour—I didn't touch a groat till the parson gied me a guinea out o' th' 'scription ;—but I may trot gaily hoam to-night. There's no live lumber to stow i' my loft; the fishes ha' the pick o' the whole cargo this bout."

" Canna we get the boats ?—I can pull an oar, thou knows, Darby, wi' the best on 'em," inquired the female.

" Boats ! " exclaimed Darby ; " ne'er a boat would live but w' keel uppermost. I'se not the chap to go to Davy Jones to-night pickled i' brine, my pratty Kate."

" Thou'rt a greedy glead ;—I'se go ask Simon ; but I'll warrant thou'lt be hankering after the reward, and the biggest share to thine own clutches."

She turned away from the incensed fisherman ; and proceeding to a short distance, we found a knot of persons gathered around a half-drowned wretch,who owed his appearance again upon land to having been lashed on some lumber which the sea had just cast ashore. Almost fainting from cold and exhaustion, he was undergoing a severe questioning from the bystanders—everyone wishing to know the name of the ship, whither bound, and the whole particulars of the disaster. We just came in time for his release ; and I soon had the satisfaction to find the poor fellow in my quarters, before a comfortable fire, his clothes drying, and his benumbed limbs chafed until the circulation was again pretty nigh restored. After drinking a tumbler of grog, he appeared to recover rapidly ; and we found on inquiry that he was master of the vessel just wrecked on the coast. He shook his head on a further

inquiry as to the fate of her crew. "A score as good hands," said he, "are gone to the bottom as ever unreefed a clean topsail or hung out a ship's canvas to the wind; I saw them all go down as I lashed myself to the jib." He groaned deeply; but speedily assuming a gayer tone, requested a quid and a quiet hammock. "My lights are nearly stove in—my head hangs as loose as a Dutchman's shrouds; a night's sleep will make all taut again."

Old Bridget was gone to bed; and unless the sailor chose to occupy the straw pallet already in the possession of a guest whose mysterious arrival seemed to be the forerunner of nothing but confusion and disaster, there did not seem any chance of obtaining a berth save by remaining in his present situation. I told him of the dilemma, but Kate replied: "We can just take the body fro' the bed; it winna tak' harm upo' the chest i' the fur nook. The captain will not maybe sleep the waur for quiet company."

He did not seem to relish the idea of passing the night even with so quiet a companion; but as it seemed the least disagreeable alternative, we agreed to pilot him to the chamber and help the miserable pallet to change occupants. The corpse we agreed to lay on some clean litter used for the bedding of the cattle. We conducted the stranger to his dormitory, which was formerly a hay loft, until converted into an occasional sleeping-room for the humble applicants who sometimes craved a night's lodging at the Sandy Holm.

The only entrance was by a crazy ladder, and so steep, that I was afraid our feeble companion would find considerable difficulty in climbing to his chamber. It was my intention to have prevented him from getting a sight of the ghastly object that occupied his couch; but pressing foremost, he ran up the ladder with surprising agility, gaining the top ere I had made preparations for the ascent. I mounted cautiously, giving him the light whilst I made good my landing; and he

went directly to the bed. I had set my foot on the floor, and was lending a hand to Kate, who had still to contend with the difficulties of the way, when I heard a dismal and most appalling shriek. Starting round, I beheld the stranger gazing on the couch, his eyeballs almost bursting from their sockets, and his countenance distorted with horror and amazement. I ran to him as the light dropped from his grasp ; catching it ere it fell, I perceived his eyes riveted on the livid and terrific features of the corpse. My limbs grew stiff with horror ; thoughts of strange import crowded on my mind ; I knew not how to shape them into any definite form, but stood trembling and appalled before the dark chaos whence they sprung Scarcely knowing what I said, still I remembered the first inquiry that burst from my lips : " Knowest thou that murdered man ? "

The words were scarcely uttered when the conscience-stricken wretch exclaimed, in accents which I shall never forget, " Know him !—yesterday he stood at my helm. I had long borne him an evil grudge, and I brooded on revenge. The devil prompted it—he was at my elbow. It was dark, and the fiend's eyes flashed when I aimed the blow. It descended with a heavy crash, and the body rolled overboard. He spoke not, save once ; it was when his hated carcase rose to the surface. I heard a faint moan ; it rang on my ear like the knell of death ; the voice rushed past—a low sepulchral shout ; in my ear it echoed with the cry of ' MURDER ! ' "

Little remains to be told ; he persisted to the last in this horrible confession. He had no wish to live ; and the avenging arm of retributive justice closed the world and its interests for ever on a wretch who had forfeited all claims to its protection—cast out, and judged unworthy of a name and a place amongst his fellow-men.

THE BAR-GAIST

From hag-bred Merlin's time have I
Thus nightly revelled to and fro;
And for my pranks men call me by
The name of Robin Goodfellow.
Fiends, ghosts, and sprites,
Who haunt the nightes,
The hags and goblins do me know;
And beldames old
My feates have told—
So *vale, vale*; ho ho ho!"

BEN JONSON.

"IN the northern parts of England," says Brand, speaking of the popular superstitions, "ghost is pronounced *gheist* and *guest*. Hence *barguest* or *bargheist*. Many streets are haunted by a *guest*, who assumes many strange appearances, as a mastiff dog, &c. It is a corruption of the Anglo-Saxon ȝaſt, *spiritus, anima*."

Drake, in his *Eboracum*, says (p. 7, Appendix), "I have been so frightened with stories of the barguest when I was a child, that I cannot help throwing away an etymology upon it. I suppose it comes from A. S. buƿp, a town, and ȝaſt, a ghost, and so signifies a town sprite. N.B.—ȝaſt is in the Belgic and Teutonic softened into gheist and geyst."

The boggart or bar-gaist of the following story resembles the German *kobold*, the Danish *nis*, and the Scotch *brownie*; but, above all, the Spanish *duende*, which signifies a spirit or sprite, supposed by the vulgar to haunt houses and highways, causing therein much terror and confusion. "DUENDE. *Espiritu que el vulgo cree que infesta las casas y travesea, causando en ellas ruidos y estruendos.*"—LEMURES LARVÆ. "To appear like a *duende*," "to move like a *duende*," are modes of speaking by which it is meant that persons appear in places where they are least expected. "To have a *duende*," signifies that a person's imagination is disturbed.

The following curious Spanish "Moral," the MS. of which has been kindly lent to the author by Mr. Crofton Croker, may not be deemed uninteresting as an illustration of the subject. We have accompanied each stanza with a parallel translation of our own.

EL

DUENDE ENEMIGO DEL JUEGO.

Cuento Morál.

Un *Duende*, grave Señor,
Que estudió la astrología,
Se propuso la manía,
De ser rico jugador.

Todos los siete planetas,
Formaban su gran consejo;
Y antes de llegar á viejo,
Ya no tenia calzetas.

Aburrido y sin dinero,
Mui tarde se arrepintió,
Y en un desban se metió
A llorar su error primero.

Por su gran sabiduria,
En duende se convirtió,
Y la guerra declaró,
Al arte de fullería.

La vecíndad asombrada,
De sus fuertes alaridos,
Corriendo despavoridos,
Abandonan la Posada.

Dueño absoluto ya el duende,
De la espantosa mansion,
Se aumentó la confusion,
Y el temor entre la gente.

Pero siendo tan demente
El hombre que es codicioso,
No faltó quien jactancioso,
Despreciase al señor duende.

Unos cuantos jugadores,
Que llaman de profesion,
Eligieron la mansion
Para exercer sus primores.

Mui luego la compañia,
Numerosa vino á ser,
Y el que llegaba á perder,
Contra al duende maldecía.

La confusa gritería,
Pronto al duende incomodó,
Y al complot se apareció
Que ápenas, cuarta tenia.

THE

DUENDE AN ENEMY TO GAMING.

A Moral Tale.

A grave and learned Senior, who
Practised astrology,
Bethought him by his lucky stars
He passing rich would be.

The planets seven his council made,
He hugged the glozing cheat;
But ere the pedant's legs were old,
No stockings held his feet!

Enraged and disappointed, he
Waxed sour and melancholy,
And to a vintner's garret trudged,
There to bewail his folly.

"I'll have revenge," he cried, then wrought
So wondrous cunningly,
That in a trice transformed he was,
A brisk *Duende* he.

This pedant, now a "Boggart" made,
No soul could rest in quiet;
Nor rogue nor bully was his match
For kicking up a riot.

At last none dared that garret drear,
His dwelling, to come nigh;
Sole master of his attic, he
Reigned peremptorily.

Not so the sharpers, who this house
Had made their special haunt:
"Señor Duende!—Humph!"—cried they,
"May suck eggs with his aunt!"

They and their worthy company,
Of the black-limbed profession,
Here cheated in a lawful way,
By that best right—possession!

The crowd increased. Some luckless wight,
His winnings at an end, he
Swore by his trumps, 'twas owing to
That rascally *Duende:*

This roused him from his garret, where
He heard the daily squabble;
And lo, in human form, he stands
Before the shirtless rabble!

Envoz, como chirimía,
Dijoles cortés y atento
Que habitaba el aposento
Donde su amo existia.

Que en alta camara fiero,
Todo senor, reclamaba
El orden, y lo aperaba,
Aunque ageno de un fullero.

No fue poca la sorpresa,
Del mensage y la vision ;
Y aun con todo, un temerón,
Quiso de ella hacer presa.

Mas el caso se fustró,
Sin saber como ni cuando,
Pues por el ayre volando
Nuestro duende se fugó.

El suceso maldecían
Los unos por el temor,
Y gritaban con furor
Los que el dinero perdían.

Vuelve por segunda vez,
El mensajero, crecido
Media vara, y atrevido,
Les dice, menos cortés.

Que su amo, era absoluto,
De aquella encantada casa,
Y su paciencia era escasa,
Con todo fullero astuto.

Que les mandaba salir
De aquel lugar, con presteza,
Pues de no, su gentileza,
Los haria consumir.

Del duendecito quisieron
Apoderarse valientes,
Mas se les fué entre los dientes,
Y sin la presa se vieron.

Ya el temor empezó á obrar
Y entraron las reflexiones,
Apoyando con varones,
Que era Duende, á no dudar.

Como siempre al jugador,
Lo sostiene la esperanza,
Fundáron la confianza,
En que un Duende es vividor.

Que su ciencia atrae dinero,
Y medios paro adquirirlo,
Y era cuerdo el admitilo,
Dandole el lugar primero.

Mas el duende que escuchaba
La trama de los fulleros,
Quiso en tales caballeros,
Vengár, lo que suspiraba.

He squeaked, " Your servant, gentlemen.
I would not thus intrude,
'Pon honour, but your conduct is
So very—very rude.

" My master,—he who sits upstairs
I mean,—no jesting, gents,—
Expects that you'll be quiet, else
He'll scold at all events."

The gamblers stared, some tumbled down,
Some gaped, some told their prayers,
But one, more daring, swore, i'fack,
He'd kick the brute downstairs !

But ere he felt th' uplifted foot
He 'scaped,—how, none could tell.
But, sooth it was, this messenger
No bodily harm befell !

The rogues, who saw him disappear,
Waxed paler than before :
Some said an *Ave !* some for fear,
And some for folly, swore.

When suddenly amidst them all,
Again the demon stands ;
A full half-yard in stature grown !
Their business he demands.

" I tell ye, villains, gamblers, thieves !
His patience is but small,
With such as you,—so master says,
Who master will you all !

" Out of the house, ye rabble rout !
Out of the house ! I say,
Or otherwise his honour will
Consume you utterly ! "

Thought one, " I'll seize this varlet vile,"
And speedily arose ;
He caught him in his clutch—the sprite
Vanished, and tweaked his nose !

" San Jerome, save us, we are loo'd
If this should be the sprite ;
The big *Duende*, best we bid
His boggartship good-night."

But hope, the gambler's enemy,
Beguiled them to their ruin;
" These ugly sprites, they say, are rich,
Yet yield naught without wooing.

" His skill may help us to repair
Our cloaks, and eke our breeches ;
Best speak him fair. We'll worship Nick
If he but grant us riches ! "

The sly *Duende*, like a mouse,
Hearkening behind the wall,
Did now resolve he quickly would
The greedy rogues bemaul.

En efecto, agigantado,
Con negro manto talár,
Cornamenta singular,
Uñas largas y barbado.

A mighty giant, lo he comes,
Wrapped in a cloak of sable ;
With horns, hoofs, nails, and beard yclad,
He jumped upon the table !

Un garrote enarbolado
Y brotando espuma y fuego,
Les dijo : *Yo devo al juego*
Mi desgracia y este estado.

A cudgel of some seven years' growth
He brandished. Fire and smoke
Shot from his lips, while thus he spake,—
" I'll gripe you gambling folk."

Los fulleros me han quitado
Con mi dinero, la vida,
Y pues que sois homicida
De todo hombre inocente :

" To gaming my disgrace I owe,
With money went my wife ;
Tis such as you the murderers be,—
This night shall end your life !

No quede vicho viviente,
En toda culta nacion,
Que ejérza la profesion
De fullero y vagamundo.

" In every nation, called refined,
Or gamblers or their wives,
Or wealthy wight, shall ne'er be found,
Who shakes the bones and thrives."

Y dando un grito profundo'
Su garrote descargando,
A todos fué despachando,
Sin dejar uno en el mundo.

With that a loud and horrid yell
He gave. And cudgel flew
Broadside amongst them ; when like vermin, he
Despatched the hungry crew !

No extinguió, sin duda, el Duende,
Toda la mala semilla,
Pues hay muchos, como el Duende,
Sin camisa, y sin capilla.

But woe is me, they were not all destroyed
For many still, by these cursed arts decoyed,
Shoeless and shirtless, miserable sinners,
Are seen, snuffing, with empty wind, their dinners !

In the *Dunske Folkesagen* appear one or two circumstances relative to the freaks of a *nis*, the goblin of the Danish popular creed, similar to the pranks detailed in our Lancashire legend. Fancy, however, sportive and playful with materials already in her possession, is of a much less creative character than is generally supposed, even by those most susceptible to her influence. It is surprising how few are the original conceptions that have sprung from the human mind. Popular superstitions—the great mass of them spread over an immense variety of surface, climate, manners, and opinions—might be supposed to exhibit a corresponding difference in originality and invention. But here we find the same paucity of incidents, varying only in character with the climate which gave them birth ; the leading features being evidently common to each. The Scandinavian and the Hindoo, the European and the Asiatic, construct their legends on the same basis ; the same stories, and even the same train of events, proving their common origin.

Mr. Crofton Croker, whose name is familiar to lovers of legendary lore, has kindly communicated the following tale. In substituting this, in place of what the author might have written on the subject, he feels convinced that his readers will not feel displeased at the change, and assures them it is with real gratification that he presents them with an article from the pen of the writer of *The Fairy Legends*.

Not far from the little snug, smoky village of Blakeley, or Blackley, there lies one of the most romantic of dells, rejoicing in a state of singular seclusion, and in the oddest of Lancashire names, to wit, the "Boggart-hole." Rich in every requisite for picturesque beauty and poetical association, it is impossible for me (who am neither a painter nor a poet) to describe this dell as it should be described; and I will therefore only beg of thee, gentle reader, who peradventure mayst not have lingered in this classical neighbourhood, to fancy a deep, deep dell, its steep sides fringed down with hazel and beech, and fern and thick undergrowth, and clothed at the bottom with the richest and greenest sward in the world. You descend, clinging to the trees, and scrambling as best you may—and now you stand on haunted ground! Tread softly, for this is the Boggart's clough; and see in yonder dark corner, and beneath the projecting mossy stone, where that dusky sullen cave yawns before us, like a bit of Salvator's best, there lurks the strange elf, the sly and mischievous Boggart. Bounce! I see him coming; oh no, it was only a hare bounding from her form; there it goes—there!

I will tell you of some of the pranks of this very Boggart, and how he teased and tormented a good it mer's family in the house hard by, and I assure you farwas a very worthy old lady who told me the story. But first, suppose we leave the Boggart's demesne, and pay a visit to the theatre of his strange doings.

You see that old farm-house about two fields distant, shaded by the sycamore-tree; that was the spot which

the Boggart or Bar-gaist selected for his freaks ; there he held his revels, perplexing honest George Cheetham —for that was the farmer's name—scaring his maids, worrying his men, and frightening the poor children out of their seven senses, so that at last not even a mouse durst show himself indoors at the farm, as he valued his whiskers, five minutes after the clock had struck twelve.

It had long been remarked that whenever a merry tale was told on a winter's evening a small shrill voice was heard above all the rest, like a baby's penny trumpet, joining in with the laughter.

" Weel laughed, Boggart, thou'rt a fine little tyke, I'se warrant, if one could but just catch glent on thee," said Robert, the youngest of the farmer's sons, early one evening, a little before Christmas, for familiarity had made them somewhat bold with their invisible guest. Now, though more pleasant stories were told on that night beside the hearth than had been told there for the three preceding months, though the fire flickered brightly, though all the faces around it were full of mirth and happiness, and though everything, it might seem, was there which could make even a Boggart enjoy himself, yet the small shrill laugh was heard no more that night after little Bob's remark.

Robert, who was a short stout fellow for his age, slept in the same bed with his elder brother John, who was reckoned an uncommonly fine and tall lad for his years. No sooner had they got fairly to sleep than they were roused by the small shrill voice in their room shouting out, " Little tyke, indeed ! little tyke thysel'. Ho, ho, ho ! I'll have my laugh now—Ho, ho, ho ! "

The room was completely dark, and all in and about the house was so still that the sound scared them fearfully. The concluding screech made the place echo again : but this strange laughter was not necessary to prevent little Robert from further sleep, as he found himself one moment seized by the feet and pulled to the

bottom of the bed, and the next moment dragged up again on his pillow. This was no sooner done, than by the same invisible power he was pulled down again, and then his head would be dragged back, and placed as high as his brother's.

" Short and long won't match—short and long won't match,—ho, ho, ho ! " shouted the well-known voice of the Boggart, between each adjustment of little Robert with his tall brother, and thus were they both wearied for more than a hundred times ; yet so great was their terror, that neither Robert nor his brother—" Long John," as he ever afterwards was called—dared to stir one inch ; and you may well suppose how delighted they both were when the first grey light of the morning appeared.

" We'st now ha' some rest, happen," said John, turning on his side in the expectation of a good nap, and covering himself up with the bed-clothes, which the pulling of Robert so often backwards and forwards had tumbled about sadly.

" Rest ! " said the same voice that had plagued them through the night, " rest !—what is rest ? Boggart knows no rest."

" Plague tak' thee for a Boggart ! " said the farmer next morning, on hearing the strange story from his children : " Plague tak' thee ! can thee not let the poor things be quiet ? But I'll be up with thee, my gentleman : so tak' th' chamber an' be hang'd to thee, if thou wilt. Jack and little Robert shall sleep o'er the cart-house, and Boggart may rest or wriggle as he likes when he is by himsel'."

The move was accordingly made, and the bed of the brothers transferred to their new sleeping-room over the cart-house, where they remained for some time undisturbed ; but his Boggartship, having now fairly become the possessor of a room at the farm, it would appear, considered himself in the light of a privileged inmate, and not, as hitherto, an occasional visitor, who merely

joined in the general expression of merriment. Familiarity, they say, breeds contempt ; and now the children's bread and butter would be snatched away, or their porringers of bread and milk would be dashed to the ground by an unseen hand ; or, if the younger ones were left alone but for a few minutes, they were sure to be found screaming with terror on the return of their nurse. Sometimes, however, he would behave himself kindly. The cream was then churned, and the pans and kettles scoured without hands. There was one circumstance which was remarkable ;—the stairs ascended from the kitchen, a partition of boards covered the ends of the steps, and formed a closet beneath the staircase. From one of the boards of this partition a large round knot was accidentally displaced ; and one day the youngest of the children, while playing with the shoe-horn, stuck it into this knot-hole. Whether or not the aperture had been formed by the Boggart as a peephole to watch the motions of the family, I cannot pretend to say. Some thought it was, for it was called the Boggart's peep-hole ; but others said that they had remembered it long before the shrill laugh of the Boggart was heard in the house. However this may have been, it is certain that the horn was ejected with surprising precision at the head of whoever put it there ; and either in mirth or in anger the horn was darted forth with great velocity, and struck the poor child over the ear.

There are few matters upon which parents feel more acutely than that of the maltreatment of their offspring , but time, that great soother of all things, at length familiarized this dangerous occurrence to everyone at the farm, and that which at the first was regarded with the utmost terror, became a kind of amusement with the more thoughtless and daring of the family. Often was the horn slipped slyly into the hole, and in return it never failed to be flung at the head of someone, but most commonly at the person who placed it there. They were used to call this pastime, in the provincial

dialect, " laking wi' t' Boggart " ; that is, playing with the Boggart. An old tailor, whom I but faintly remember, used to say that the horn was often " pitched " at his head, and at the head of his apprentice, whilst seated here on the kitchen table, when they went their rounds to work, as is customary with country tailors. At length the goblin, not contented with flinging the horn, returned to his night persecutions. Heavy steps, as of a person in wooden clogs, were at first heard clattering downstairs in the dead hour of darkness ; then the pewter and earthen dishes appeared to be dashed on the kitchen-floor ; though in the morning all remained uninjured on their respective shelves. The children generally were marked out as objects of dislike by their unearthly tormentor. The curtains of their beds would be violently pulled to and fro—then a heavy weight, as of a human being, would press them nearly to suffocation, from which it was impossible to escape. The night, instead of being the time for repose, was disturbed with screams and dreadful noises, and thus was the whole house alarmed night after night. Things could not long continue in this fashion ; the farmer and his good dame resolved to leave a place where they could no longer expect rest or comfort : and George Cheetham was actually following with his wife and family the last load of furniture, when they were met by a neighbouring farmer, named John Marshall.

" Well, Georgey, and soa you're leaving th' owd house at last ? " said Marshall.

" Heigh, Johnny, ma lad, I'm in a manner forced to 't, thou sees," replied the other ; " for that wearyfu' Boggart torments us soa, we can neither rest neet nor day for't. It seems loike to have a malice again't young ans—an' it ommost kills my poor dame here at thoughts on't, and soa thou sees we're forc'd to flitt like."

He had got thus far in his complaint, when, behold, a shrill voice from a deep upright churn, the topmost

utensil on the cart, called out—" Aye, aye, neighbour, we're flitting, you see."

" 'Od rot thee ! " exclaimed George : " if I'd known thou'd been flitting too I wadn't ha' stirred a peg. Nay, nay—it's to no use, Mally," he continued, turning to his wife, " we may as weel turn back again to th' owd house as be tormented in another not so convenient."

They did return ; but the Boggart, having from the occurrence ascertained the insecurity of his tenure, became less outrageous, and was never more guilty of disturbing, in any extraordinary degree, the quiet of the family.

THE HAUNTED MANOR-HOUSE

" But he was wary wise in all his way,
And well perceived his deceitful sleight ;
No suffered lust his safety to betray ;
So goodly did beguile the *guiler* of the prey."

SPENSER.

INCE HALL stands about a mile from Wigan, on the left-hand side of the high road to Bolton. It is a very conspicuous object, its ancient and well-preserved front generally attracting the notice and inquiry of travellers.

About a mile to the south-east stands another place of the same name once belonging to the Gerards of Bryn.

The two mansions are sometimes confounded together in topographical inquiries ; and the following story, by its title of the " Manor-house," would seem as though intended for the other and comparatively less known mansion, the old " Manor-house of Ince," once inhabited by a family of that name. But the same traditions are often found connected with localities widely asunder, so that we need not be surprised at the mistake which gossips have made in this particular instance.

It is, after all, quite uncertain whether the event occurred here or not, story-tellers being very apt to fix upon any spot near at hand on which to fasten their marvellous narratives, and to give them a stronger hold on the listener's imagination.

The story is supposed to be written or related by the chief actor in the occurrences arising out of the "Haunted House." The author has thrown the narrative into this form, as he hopes it will vary the style of the traditions, and probably give more character and interest to the events here detailed than they would retain if told by a third person.

The coach set me down at the entrance to a long and unweeded avenue. A double row of beech-trees saluted me, as I passed, with a rich shower of wet leaves, and shook their bare arms, growling as the loud sough of the wind went through their decayed branches. The old house was before me. Its numerous and irregularly-contrived compartments in front were streaked in black and white zig-zags—*vandyked*, I think, the fairest jewels of the creation call this chaste and elegant ornament. It was near the close of a dark autumnal day, and a mass of gable-ends stood sharp and erect against the wild and lowering sky. Each of these pinnacles could once boast of its admired and appropriate ornament—a little weathercock; but they had cast off their gilded plumage for ever, and fallen from their high estate, like the once neatly trimmed mansion which I was now visiting. A magpie was perched upon a huge stack of chimneys, his black and white plumage rivalling the mottled edifice at his feet. Perhaps he was the wraith, the departing vision of the decaying fabric; an apparition, insubstantial as the honours and dignities of the ancient and reverend house of——!

I looked eagerly at the long, low casements: a faint glimmer was visible. It proceeded only from the wan reflection of a sickly sunbeam behind me, struggling through the cleft of a dark hail-cloud. It was the window where in my boyhood I had often peeped at the town-clock through my little telescope. There was the nursery chamber, and no wonder that it was regarded with feelings of the deepest interest. Here the first dawnings of reason broke in upon my soul; the first faint gleams of intelligence awakened me from a state of infantine unconsciousness. It was here that I first drank eagerly of the fresh rills of knowledge; here my imagination, ardent and unrepressed, first plumed its wings for flight, and I stepped forth over its threshold into a world long since tried, and found as

unsatisfying and unreal as the false glimmer that now mocked me from the hall of my fathers.

A truce to sentiment!—I came hither, it may be, for a different purpose. A temporary gush will occasionally spring up from the first well-head of our affections. However homely and seemingly ill-adapted, in outward show and character, for giving birth to those feelings generally designated by the epithet romantic, the place where we first breathed, where our ideas were first moulded, formed and assimilated, as it were, to the condition of the surrounding atmosphere (their very shape and colour determined by the medium in which they first sprung) the casual recurrence of a scene like this—forming part and parcel of our very existence, and incorporated with the very fabric of our thoughts—must, in spite of all subsequent impressions, revive those feelings, however long they may have been dormant, with a force and vividness which the bare recollection can never excite.

The garden-gate stood open. The initials of my name, still legible, appeared rudely carved on the posts—a boyish propensity which most of us have indulged; and I well remember ministering to its gratification wherever I durst hazard the experiment, when first initiated into the mystery of hewing out these important letters with a rusty penknife.

Not a creature was stirring; and the nature of the present occupants, whether sylphs, gnomes, or genii, was a question not at all, as it yet appeared, in a train for solution. The front door was closed; but as I knew every turn and corner about the house, I made no doubt of soon finding out its inmates, if any of them were in the neighbourhood. I worked my way through the garden, knee-deep and rank with weed, for the purpose of reconnoitring the back-offices. I steered pretty cautiously past what memory, that great dealer in hyperbole, had hitherto generally contrived to picture as a huge lake—now, to my astonishment, dwindled

into a duck-pond—but not without danger from its slippery margin. It still reposed under the shadow of the old cherry-tree, once the harbinger of delight, as the returning season gave intimation of another bountiful supply of fruit. Its gnarled stump, now stunted and decaying, had scarcely one token of life upon its scattered branches. Following a narrow walk, nearly obliterated, I entered a paved court. The first tramp awoke a train of echoes that seemed as though they had slumbered since my departure, and now started from their sleep to greet or to admonish the returning truant. Grass in luxuriant tufts, capriciously disposed, grew about in large patches. The breeze passed heavily by, rustling the dark swathe, and murmuring fitfully as it departed. Desolation seemed to have marked the spot for her own—the grim abode of solitude and despair. During twenty years' sojourn in a strange land, memory had still, with untiring delight, painted the old mansion in all its primeval primness and simplicity—fresh as I had left it, full of buoyancy and delight, to take possession of the paradise which imagination had created. I had, indeed, been informed that at my father's death it became the habitation of a stranger; but no intelligence as to its present condition had ever reached me. Being at L——, and only some twenty miles distant, I could not resist the temptation of once more gazing on the old Manor-house, and of comparing its present aspect with that but too faithfully engrafted on my recollections.

To all appearance the house was tenantless. I tried the door of a side kitchen or scullery; it was fastened, but the rusty bolts yielded to no very forcible pressure; and I once more penetrated into the kitchen, that exhaustless magazine which had furnished hams and eggs, greens and bacon, with other sundry and necessary condiments, to the progenitors of our race for at least two centuries. A marvellous change!—to me it appeared as if wrought in a moment, so recently had

memory reinstated the scenes of my youth in all their pristine splendour. Now no smoke rolled lazily away from the heavy billet; no blaze greeted my sight; no savoury steam regaled the sense. Dark, cheerless, cold—the long bars emitted no radiance; the hearth unswept, on which Growler once panted with heat and fatness.

Though night was fast approaching, I could not resist the temptation of once more exploring the deserted chambers, the scene of many a youthful frolic. I sprang with reckless facility up the vast staircase. The shallow steps were not sufficiently accommodating to my impatience, and I leapt rather than ran, with the intention of paying my first visit to that *cockaigne* of childhood, that paradise of little fools—the nursery. How small, dwindled almost into a span, appeared that once mighty and almost boundless apartment, every nook of which was a separate territory, every drawer and cupboard the boundary of another kingdom! Three or four strides brought me to the window;—the broad church-tower was still visible, peacefully reposing in the dim and heavy twilight. The evening bell was tolling: what a host of recollections were awakened at the sound! Days and hours long forgotten seemed to rise up at its voice, like the spirits of the departed sweeping by, awful and indistinct. These impressions soon became more vivid; they rushed on with greater rapidity: I turned from the window, and was startled at the sudden moving of a shadow.

It was a faint, long-drawn figure of myself on floor and opposite wall. Ashamed of my fears, I was preparing to quit the apartment when my attention was arrested by a drawing which I had once scrawled and stuck against the wall with all the ardour of a first achievement. It owed its preservation to an unlucky, but effectual, contrivance of mine for securing its perpetuity: a paste-brush, purloined from the kitchen, had made all fast; and the piece, alike impregnable

to assaults or siege, withstood every effort for its removal. In fact, this could not be accomplished without at the same time tearing off a portion from the dingy papering of the room, and leaving a disagreeable void instead of my sprawling performance. With the less evil it appeared each succeeding occupant had been contented; and the drawing had stood its ground in spite of dust and dilapidation. I felt wishful for the possession of so valuable a memorial of past exploits. I examined it again and again, but not a single corner betrayed symptoms of lesion: it stuck bolt upright; and the dun squat figures portrayed on it appeared to leer at me most provokingly. Not a slip or tear presented itself as vantage-ground for the projected attack and I had no other resource left of gaining possession than what may be denominated the Cæsarean mode.

I accordingly took out my knife, and commenced operations by cutting out at the same time a portion of the ornamental papering from the wall commensurate with the picture. I looked upon it with a sort of superstitious reverence; and I have always thought that the strong and eager impulse I felt for the possession of this hideous daub proceeded from a far different source than mere fondness for the memorials of childhood. Be that as it may, I am a firm believer in a special Providence; and that, too, as discovered in the most trivial as well as the most important concerns of life. It was whilst cutting down upon what seemed like wainscoting over which the papering of the room had been laid, that my knife glanced on something much harder than the rest. Turning aside my spoils, I saw what through the dusk appeared very like the hinge of a concealed door. My curiosity was roused, and I made a hasty pull, which at once drew down a mighty fragment from the wall, consisting of plaster, paper, and rotten canvas; and some minutes elapsed ere the subsiding cloud of dust enabled me to discern the *terra incognita* I had just uncovered. Sure enough

there was a door, and as surely did the spirit of enterprise prompt me to open it. With difficulty I accomplished my purpose ; it yielded at length to my efforts ; but the noise of the half-corroded hinges, grating and shrieking on their rusty pivots, may be conceived as sufficiently dismal and appalling. I know not if once at least I did not draw back, or let go my hold incontinently, as the din " grew long and loud." I own, without hesitation, that I turned away my head from the opening, as it became wider and wider at every pull ; and it required a considerable effort before I could summon the requisite courage to look into the gap. My head seemed as difficult to move as the door. I cannot say that I was absolutely afraid of ghosts, but I *was* afraid of a peep from behind the door—afraid of being frightened ! At length, with desperate boldness, I thrust my head plump into the chasm !

But I was more startled at the noise I had thus produced than by anything that was visible. As far as the darkness would permit, I explored the interior, which, after all, was neither more nor less than a small closet. From what cause it had been shut out from the apartment to which it had belonged, it were vain to conjecture. All that was really cognisable to the senses presented itself in the shape of a shallow recess, some four feet by two, utterly unfurnished, save with some inches of accumulated dust and rubbish, that made it a work of great peril to grope out the fact of its otherwise absolute emptiness. This discovery like many other notable enterprises seemed to lead to nothing. I stepped out of my den, reeking with spoils which I would much rather have left undisturbed in their dark recesses.

Preparing for my departure, and a visit to my relation in the nearly adjoining town, who as yet had no other intimation of my arrival than a hasty note, to apprise him that I had once more set foot on English ground, and intended to visit him before my return, I stepped

again to the window. Darkness was fast gathering about me ; a heavy scud was driven rapidly across the heavens, and the wind wailed in short and mournful gusts past the chamber. The avenue was just visible from the spot where I stood ; and, looking down, I thought I could discern more than one dark object moving apparently towards the house. It may be readily conceived that I beheld their approach with an interest by no means free from apprehension ; and it was not long ere two beings, in human habiliments, were distinctly seen at a short distance from the gate by which I had entered. Feeling myself an intruder, and not being very satisfactorily prepared to account for my forcible entry into the premises, and the injury I had committed on the property of a stranger, I drew hastily aside, determined to effect a retreat whenever and wherever it might be in my power. Door and window alternately presented themselves for the accomplishment of this unpleasant purpose, but before I could satisfy myself as to which was the more eligible offer, as doubters generally do contrive it, I lost all chance of availing myself of either. "*Facilis descensus*"—"Easier in than out"—etc., occurred to me ; and other classical allusions, more appropriate than agreeable.

I heard voices and footsteps outside in the hall. The stairs creaked, and it was but too evident they were coming, and that with a most unerring and provoking perseverance. Surely, thought I, these gentry have noses like the sleuth-hound ; and I made no doubt but they would undeviatingly follow them into the very scene of my labours ; and what excuse could I make for the havoc I had committed ? I stood stupefied, and unable to move. The thoughts of being hauled neck and heels before the next justice, on a charge of housebreaking, or what not—committed to prison—tried, perhaps, and—the sequel was more than even imagination durst conceive. Recoiling in horror from the picture, it was with something like instinctive

desperation that I flew to the little closet, and shut myself in, with all the speed and precision my fears would allow. Sure enough the brutes were making the best of their way into the chamber, and every moment I expected they would track their victim to his hiding-place. After a few moments of inconceivable agony, I was relieved at finding from their conversation that no notion was entertained, at present, of any witness to their proceedings.

"I tell thee, Gilbert, these rusty locks can keep nothing safe. It's but some few months since we were here, and thou knowest the doors were all fast. The kitchen door-post is now as rotten as touchwood; no bolt will fasten it."

"Nail it up—nail 'em all up," growled Gilbert; "nobody'll live here now; or else set fire to't. It'll make a rare bonfire to burn that ugly old will in."

A boisterous laugh here broke from the remorseless Gilbert. It fell upon my ear as something with which I had once been disagreeably familiar. The voice of the first speaker, too, seemed the echo of one that had been heard in childhood. A friendly chink permitted me to gain the information I sought; there stood my uncle and his trusty familiar. In my youth I had contracted a somewhat unaccountable aversion to the latter personage. I well remembered his downcast grey eye, deprived of its fellow; and the malignant pleasure he took in thwarting and disturbing my childish amusements. This prepossessing Cyclop held a tinder-box, and was preparing to light a match. My uncle's figure I could not mistake: a score of winters had cast their shadows on his brow since we had separated; but he still stood as he was wont—tall, erect, and muscular, though age had slightly drooped his proud forehead; and I could discern his long-lapped waistcoat somewhat less conspicuous in front. He was my mother's brother, and the only surviving relation on whom I had any claim. My fears were set at rest, but curiosity

stole into their place. I felt an irrepressible inclination to watch their proceedings, though eavesdropping was a subterfuge that I abhorred. I should, I am confident —at least, I hope so—have immediately discovered myself, had not a single word which I had overheard prevented me. The "will" to which they alluded might to me, perhaps, be an object of no trivial importance.

"I wish with all my heart it were burnt!" said mine uncle.

"The will, or the house?" peevishly retorted Gilbert.

"Both!" cried the other, with an emphasis and expression that made me tremble.

"If we burn the house, the papers will not rise out of it, depend on't, master," continued Gilbert; "and that box in the next closet will not prove like Goody Blake's salamander."

I began to feel particularly uncomfortable.

"I wish they had all been burnt long ago," said mine honest uncle. After a pause he went on: "This scapegrace nephew of mine will be here shortly. For fear of accidents—accidents, I say, Gilbert—it were better to have all safe. Who knows what may be lurking in the old house, to rise up some day as a witness against us! I intend either to pull it down or set fire to it. But we'll make sure of the will first."

"A rambling jackanapes of a nephew!" said Gilbert; "I hoped the fishes had supped on him before now. We never thought, master, he could be alive, as he sent no word about his being either alive or dead. But I guess," continued this amiable servant, "he might ha' staid longer, and you wouldn't ha' fretted for his company."

Listeners hear no good of themselves; but I determined to reward the old villain very shortly for his good wishes.

"Gilbert, when there's work to do thou art always readier with thy tongue than with thy fingers. Look!

the match has gone out twice—leave off puffing and fetch the box; I'll manage about the candle."

I began to feel a strange sensation rambling about me. Gilbert left the room, however, and I applied myself with redoubled diligence to the crevice. My dishonest relation proceeded to revive the expiring sparks; the light shone full upon his hard features. It might be fancy, but guilt—broad, legible, remorseless guilt—seemed to mark every inflection of his visage; his brow contracted—his eye turned cautiously and fearfully round the apartment, and more than once it rested upon the gap I had made. I saw him strike his hand upon his puckered brow, and a stifled groan escaped him; but as if ashamed of his better feelings, he clenched it in an attitude of defiance, and listened eagerly for the return of his servant. The slow footsteps of Gilbert soon announced his approach, and apparently with some heavy burden. He threw it on the floor, and I heard a key applied and the rusty wards answering to the touch. The business in which they were now engaged was out of my limited sphere of vision.

"I think, master, the damps will soon ding down the old house: look at the wall; the paper hangs for all the world like the clerk's wig—ha, ha! If we should burn the house down we'd rid it o' the ghosts. Would they stand fire, think you, or be off to cooler quarters?"

"Hush, Gilbert; thou art wicked enough to bring a whole legion about us, if any of them are within hearing. I always seemed to treat these stories with contempt, but I never could satisfy myself about the noises that old Gidlow and his wife heard. Thou knowest he was driven out of the house by them. People wondered that I did not come and live here, instead of letting it run to ruin. It's pretty generally thought that I fear neither man nor devil; but—oh! here it is; here is the will. I care nothing for the rest, provided this be cancelled."

"Aye, master, they said the ghost never left off scratching as long as anybody was in the room. Which room was it, I wonder?—I never thought on't to inquire; but—I don't like this a bit. It runs in my head it is the very place; and behind that wall, too, where it took up its quarters like as it might be just a-back of the paper there. Think you, master, the old tyke has pull'd it down wi' scratching?"

"Gilbert," said my uncle solemnly, "I don't like these jests of thine. Save them, I prithee, for fitter subjects. The will is what we came for. Let us dispose of that quietly, and I promise thee I'll never set foot here again."

As he spoke he approached the candle—it was just within my view—and opened the will that it might yield the more readily to the blaze. I watched him evidently preparing to consume a document with which I felt convinced my welfare and interests were intimately connected. There was not a moment to be lost; but how to get possession was no easy contrivance. If I sallied forth to its rescue they might murder me, or at least prevent its falling into my hands. This plan could only prolong its existence a few moments, and would to a certainty ensure its eventual destruction. Gilbert's dissertation on the occupations and amusements of the ghosts came very opportunely to my aid, and immediately I put into execution what now appeared my only hope of its safety. Just as a corner of the paper was entering the flame I gave a pretty loud scratch, at the same time anxiously observing the effect it might produce. I was overjoyed to find the enemy intimidated at least by the first fire. Another volley, and another succeeded, until even the sceptical Gilbert was dismayed. My uncle seemed riveted to the spot, his hands widely disparted, so that the flame and its destined prey were now pretty far asunder. Neither of the culprits spoke; and I hoped that little more would be necessary to rout them fairly from the field.

As yet they did not seem disposed to move ; and I was afraid of a rally, should reason get the better of their fears.

" Rats ! rats ! " shouted Gilbert. " We'll singe their tails for them." The scratching ceased. Again the paper was approaching to its dreaded catastrophe.

" *Beware !* " I cried, in a deep and sepulchral tone, that startled even the utterer. What effect it had produced on my auditory I was left alone to conjecture. The candle dropped from the incendiary's grasp, and the spoil was left a prey to the bugbear that possessed their imaginations. With feelings of unmixed delight, I heard them clear the stairs at a few leaps, run through the hall, and soon afterwards a terrific bellow from Gilbert announced their descent into the avenue.

Luckily the light was not extinct, and I lost no time in taking possession of the document, which I considered of the most importance. A number of loose papers, the contents of a huge trunk, were scattered about ; but my attention was more particularly directed to the paper which had been the object of my uncle's visit to the Manor-house. To my great joy, this was neither less nor more than my father's will, witnessed and sealed in due form, wherein the possessions of my ancestors were conveyed, absolutely and unconditionally, without entail, unencumbered and unembarrassed, to me and to my assigns. I thought it most likely that the papers in and about the trunk might be of use, either as corroborative evidence, in case my uncle should choose to litigate the point and brand the orginal document as a forgery, or as a direct testimony to the validity of my claim. I was rather puzzled in what manner to convey them from the place, so as not to excite suspicion, should the two worthies return. I was pretty certain they would not leave matters as they now stood when their fears were allayed, and daylight would probably impart sufficient courage to induce them to repeat their visit. On finding the

papers removed, the nature of this night's ghostly admonition would immediately be guessed, and measures taken to thwart any proceedings which it might be in my power to adopt. To prevent discovery, I hit upon the following expedient: I sorted out the waste-paper, a considerable quantity of which served as envelopes to the rest, setting fire to it in such a manner that the contents of the trunk might appear to have been destroyed by the falling of the candle. I succeeded very much to my own satisfaction. Disturbed and agonized as my feelings had been during the discovery, the idea of having defeated the plan of my iniquitous relative gave a zest to my acquisitions almost as great as if I had already taken possession of my paternal inheritance.

Before I left the apartment, I poured out my heart in thanksgivings to that unseen Power whose hand, I am firmly convinced, brought me thither at so critical a moment, to frustrate the schemes and machinations of the enemy.

Bundling up the papers, my knowledge of the vicinity enabled me to reach a small tavern in the neighbourhood without the risk of being recognized. Here I continued two or three days, examining the documents, with the assistance of an honest limb of the law from W——. H entertained considerable doubts as to the issue of a trial, feeling convinced that a forged will would be prepared, if not already in existence, and that my relative would not relinquish his fraudulent claim should the law be openly appealed to. He strongly recommended that proceedings of a different nature should be first tried, in hopes of enclosing the villain in his own toils; and these, if successful, would save the uncertain and expensive process of a suit. I felt unwilling to adopt any mode of attack but that of open warfare, and urged that possession of the real will would be sufficient to reinstate me as the lawful heir. The man of law smiled. He inquired how I should be able to prove that the forgery which my uncle would in all

probability produce was not the genuine testament; and as the date would inevitably be subsequent to the one I held, it would annul any former bequest. As to my tale about burning the will, that might or might not be treated as a story trumped up for the occasion. I had no witnesses to prove the fact; and though appearances were certainly in my favour, yet the case could only be decided according to evidence. With great reluctance I consented to take a part in the scheme he chalked out for my guidance; and, on the third day from my arrival, I walked a few miles and returned to the town, that it might appear as if I had only just arrived. On being set down at my uncle's, I had the satisfaction to find, as far as could be gathered from his manner, that he had no idea of my recent sojourn in the neighbourhood. Of course the conversation turned on the death of my revered parents, and the way in which their property had been disposed of.

"I can only repeat," continued he, "what I, as the only executor under your father's will, was commissioned to inform you at his decease. The property was heavily mortgaged before your departure; and its continued depression in value, arising from causes that could not have been foreseen, left the executor no other alternative but that of giving the creditors possession. The will is here," said he, taking out a paper, neatly folded and mounted with red tape, from a bureau. "It is necessarily brief, and merely enumerates the names of the mortgagees and amounts owing. I was unfortunately the principal creditor, having been a considerable loser from my wish to preserve the property inviolate. For the credit of the family I paid off the remaining incumbrances, and the estate has lapsed to me as the lawful possessor."

He placed the document in my hands. I read in it a very technical tribute of testamentary gratitude to M—— S—— Esq., styled therein "beloved brother";

and a slight mention of my name, but no bequest, save that of recommending me to the kindness of my relative, in case it should please Heaven to send me once more to my native shores. I was aware he would be on the watch; guarding, therefore, against any expression of my feelings, I eagerly perused the deed, and with a sigh, which he would naturally attribute to any cause but the real one, I returned it into his hands.

"I find," said he, "from your letter received on the 23rd current, that you are not making a long stay in this neighbourhood. It is better, perhaps, that you should not. The old house is sadly out of repair. Three years ago next May, David Gidlow, the tenant under lease from me, left it, and I have not yet been able to meet with another occupant fully to my satisfaction; indeed, I have some intention of pulling down the house and disposing of the materials."

"Pulling it down!" I exclaimed, with indignation.

"Yes, that is, it is so untenantable—so—what shall I call it?—that nobody cares to live there."

"I hope it is not haunted?"

"Haunted!" exclaimed he, surveying me with a severe and scrutinizing glance. "What should have put that into your head?"

I was afraid I had said too much; and anxious to allay the suspicion I saw gathering in his countenance—"Nay, uncle," I quickly rejoined; "but you seemed so afraid of speaking out upon the matter that I thought there must needs be a ghost at the bottom of it."

"As for that," said he, carelessly; "the foolish farmer and his wife did hint something of the sort; but it is well known that I pay no attention to such tales. The long and the short of it, I fancy, was, that they were tired of their bargain, and wanted me to take it off their hands."

Here honest Gilbert entered, to say that Mr. L——, the attorney, would be glad to have a word with his master.

"Tell Mr. L——to walk in. We have no secrets here. Excuse me, nephew; this man is one of our lawyers. He has nothing to communicate but what you may hear, I dare say. If he should have any private business, you can step into the next room."

The attorney entering, I was introduced as nephew to Mr. S——, just arrived from the Indies, and so forth. Standing, Mr. L——made due obeisance.

"Sit down; sit down, Mr. L——," cried my uncle. "You need not be bowing there for a job. Poor fellow, he has not much left to grease the paws of a lawyer. Well, sir, your errand?"

"I came, Mr. S——, respecting the Manor-house. Perhaps you would not have any objections to a tenant!"

"I cannot say just now. I have had some thoughts of pulling it down."

"Sir! you would not demolish a building, the growth of centuries—a family mansion—been in the descent since James's time. It would be barbarous. The antiques would be about your ears."

"I care nothing for the antiquities; and, moreover, I do not choose to let the house. Any further business with me this morning, sir?"

"Nothing of consequence—I only came about the house."

"Pray, Mr. L——," said I, "what sort of a tenant have you in view;—one you could recommend? I think my uncle has more regard for the old mansion-house than comports with the outrage he threatens. The will says, if I read aright, that the house and property may be sold, should the executor see fit; but, as to pulling it down, I am sure my father never meant anything so deplorable. Allow me another glance at that paper."

"Please to observe, nephew, that the will makes it mine, and as such I have a right to dispose of the whole in such manner as I may deem best. If you have any

doubts, I refer you to Mr. L——, who sits smiling at your unlawyer-like opinions."

"Pray allow me one moment," said the curious attorney. He looked at the signature and those of the parties witnessing.

"Martha S——; your late sister, I presume?"

My uncle nodded assent.

"Gilbert Hodgon—your servant?"

"The same. To what purpose, sir, are these questions?" angrily inquired my uncle.

"Merely matters of form—a habit we lawyers cannot easily throw aside whenever we get a sight of musty parchments. I hope you will pardon my freedom?"

"Oh! as for that, you are welcome to ask as many questions as you think proper; they will be easily answered, I take it."

"Doubtless," said the persevering man of words. "Whenever I take up a deed, for instance—it is just the habit of the thing, Mr. S——,—I always look at it as a banker looks at a note. He could not for the life of him gather one up without first ascertaining that it was genuine."

"Genuine!" exclaimed my uncle, thrown off his guard. "You do not suspect that I have forged it?"

"Forged it! why, how could that enter your head, Mr. S——? I should as soon suspect you of forging a bank-note or coining a guinea. Ringing a guinea, sir, does not at all imply that the payee suspects the payer to be an adept in the ingenious and much-abused art. We should be prodigiously surprised if the payer were to start up in a tantrum, and say, 'Do you suspect me, sir, of having coined it?'"

"Sir, if you came hither for the purpose of insulting *me*——"

"I came upon no such business, Mr. S——; but, as you seem disposed to be captious, I *will* make free to say, and it would be the opinion of ninety-nine hun-

dredths of the profession, that it might possibly have been a little more satisfactory to the heir-apparent had the witnesses to this, the most solemn and important act of a man's life, been any other than, firstly, a defunct sister to the party claiming the whole residue: and secondly, Mr. Gilbert Hodgon, his servant. Nay, sir," said the pertinacious lawyer, rising, "I do not wish to use more circumlocution than is necessary; I have stated my suspicions, and if you are an honest man, you can have no objections, at least, to satisfy your nephew on the subject, who seems, to say the truth, much astonished at our accidental parley."

"And pray who made you a ruler and a judge between us?"

"*I* have no business with it, I own; but as you seemed rather angry, I made bold to give an opinion on the little technicalities aforesaid. If you choose, sir," addressing himself to me, "the matter is now at rest."

"Of course," I replied, "Mr. S—— will be ready to give every satisfaction that may be required as regards the validity of the witnesses. I request, uncle, that you will not lose one moment in rebutting these insinuations. For your own sake and mine, it is not proper that your conduct should go forth to the world in the shape in which this gentleman may think fit to represent it."

"If he dare speak one word——"

"Nay, uncle, that is not the way to stop folks' mouths now-a-days. Nothing but the actual gag, or a line of conduct that courts no favour and requires no concealment, will pass current with the world. I request, sir," addressing myself to the attorney, "that you will not leave this house until you have given Mr. S—— the opportunity of clearing himself from any blame in this transaction."

"As matters have assumed this posture," said Mr. L——, "I should be deficient in respect to the profession of which I have the honour to be a member, did I not

justify my conduct in the best manner I am able. Have I liberty to proceed ? "

" Proceed as you like, you will not prove the testament to be a forgery. The signing and witnessing were done in my presence," said my uncle. He rose from his chair, instinctively locked up his bureau ; and if such stern features could assume an aspect of still greater asperity, it was when the interrogator thus continued : " You were, as you observe, Mr. S——, an eye-witness to the due subscription of this deed. If I am to clear myself from the imputation of unjustifiable curiosity, I must beg leave to examine yourself and the surviving witness apart, merely as to the minutiæ of the circumstances under which it was finally completed : for instance, was the late Mr—— in bed, or was he sick or well, when the deed was executed ? "

A cadaverous hue stole over the dark features of the culprit ; their aspect varying and distorted, in which fear and deadly anger painfully strove for pre-eminence.

" And wherefore apart ? " said he, with a hideous grin. He stamped suddenly on the floor.

" If that summons be for your servant, you might have saved yourself the trouble, sir," said his tormentor, with great coolness and intrepidity. " Gilbert is at my office, whither I sent him on an errand, thinking he would be best out of the way for a while. I find, however, that we shall have need of him. It is as well, nevertheless, that he is out of the way of signals."

" A base conspiracy ! " roared the infuriated villain. " Nephew, how is this ? And in my own house—bullied, baited. But I will be revenged—I will."

Here he became exhausted with rage, and sat down. On Mr. L——attempting to speak, he cried out : " I will answer no questions, and I defy you. Gilbert may say what he likes ; but he cannot contradict my words. I'll speak none."

" These would be strange words, indeed, Mr. S——, from an innocent man. Know you that WILL ? "

said the lawyer, in a voice of thunder, and at the same time exhibiting the real instrument so miraculously preserved from destruction. I shall never forget his first look of horror and astonishment. Had a spectre risen up, arrayed in all the terrors of the prison-house, he could not have exhibited more appalling symptoms of unmitigated despair. He shuddered audibly. It was the very crisis of his agony. A portentous silence ensued. Some minutes elapsed before it was interrupted. Mr. L—— was the first to break so disagreeable a pause.

"Mr. S——, it is useless to carry on this scene of duplicity: neither party would benefit by it. *You have forged that deed!* We have sufficient evidence of your attempt to destroy this document I now hold, in the very mansion which your unhallowed hands would, but for the direct interposition of Providence, have levelled with the dust. On one condition, and on one only, your conduct shall be concealed from the knowledge of your fellow-men. The eye of Providence alone has hitherto tracked the tortuous course of your villainy. On one condition, I say, the past is for ever concealed from the eye of the world." Another pause. My uncle groaned in the agony of his spirit. Had his heart's blood been at stake, he could not have evinced a greater reluctance than he now showed at the thoughts of relinquishing his ill-gotten wealth.

"What is it?"

"Destroy with your own hands that forged testimony of your guilt. Your nephew does not wish to bring an old man's grey hairs to an ignominious grave."

He took the deed, and, turning aside his head, committed it to the flames. He appeared to breathe more freely when it was consumed; but the struggle had been too severe even for his unyielding frame, iron-bound though it seemed. As he turned trembling from the hearth, he sank into his chair, threw his hands over his face, and groaned deeply. The next moment he fixed

his eyes steadily on me. A glassy brightness suddenly shot over them ; a dimness followed like the shadows of death. He held out his hand ; his head bowed ; and he bade adieu to the world and its interests for ever !

CLITHEROE CASTLE

OR

THE LAST OF THE LACIES

" By that painful way they pass
Forth to an hill that was both steep and high ;
On top whereof a sacred chapel was,
And eke a little hermitage thereby."

SPENSER'S *Fairy Queen.*

CLITHEROE, *the hill by the waters,* the ancient seat of the Lacies, carries back the mind to earlier periods and events—to a rude and barbarous age, where justice was dispensed, and tribute paid, by the feudatories to their lords, whose power, little less than arbitrary, was held directly from the crown.

The Lacies came over with the Conqueror ; and, on the defection of Robert de Poictou, obtained, as their share of the spoil, sixty knights' fees, principally in Yorkshire and Lancashire. For the better maintenance of their dignity they built two castles, one at Pontefract, the principal residence, and another at Clitheroe. A *great fee,* or great lordship, as Pontefract, was a possession of the highest order ; an honour, or seigniory, like Clitheroe, consisting of a number of manors, was the next in rank ; and these manors were severally held by their subordinate lords in dependence on the lord paramount, the lord of the fee or honour.

What was the precise aspect of our country when the Normans possessed themselves of the land, it might be deemed an effort of the imagination perhaps to portray. " Yet," says Dr. Whitaker, in one of his happier moods, " could a curious observer of the present-day carry himself

nine or ten centuries back, and, ranging the summit of Pendle, survey the forked Calder on one side, and the bolder margins of Ribble and Hodder on the other, instead of populous towns and villages, the castle, the old tower-built house, the elegant modern mansion, the artificial plantation, the park and pleasure ground, or instead of uninterrupted enclosures, which have driven sterility almost to the summit of the fells; how great must then have been the contrast, when, ranging either at a distance or immediately beneath, his eye must have caught vast tracts of forest ground stagnating with bog or darkened by native woods, where the wild ox, the roe, the stag, and the wolf had scarcely learned the supremacy of man—when, directing his view to the intermediate spaces, to the windings of the valleys or the expanse of plain beneath, he could only have distinguished a few insulated patches of culture, each encircling a village of wretched cabins, among which would still be remarked one rude mansion of wood, scarcely equal in comfort to a modern cottage, yet then rising proudly eminent above the rest, where the Saxon lord, surrounded by his faithful cotari, enjoyed a rude and solitary independence, owning no superior but his sovereign.

"This was undoubtedly a state of great simplicity and freedom, such as admirers of uncultivated nature may affect to applaud. But although revolutions in civil society seldom produce anything better than a change of vices, yet surely no wise or good man can lament the subversion of Saxon polity for that which followed. Their laws were contemptible for imbecility, their habits odious for intemperance; and if we can for a moment persuade ourselves that their language has any charm, that proceeds less, perhaps, from anything harmonious and expressive in itself, or anything valuable in the information it conveys, than that it is rare and not of very easy attainment; that it forms the rugged basis of our own tongue; and, above all, that we hear it loudly echoed in the dialect of our own vulgar. Indeed, the manners as well as language of a Lancashire clown often suggest the idea of a Saxon peasant; and prove, with respect to remote tracts like these, little affected by foreign admixtures, how strong is the power of traduction, how faithfully character and pro-

pensities may be transmitted through more than twenty generations."

The Normans were a more polished, a more abstemious people; as scribes and architects they were men to whom this district was greatly indebted. Our only castle, our oldest remaining churches, our most curious and valuable records, are all Norman.

"Such was the state of property and manners when the house of Lacy became possessed of Blackburnshire." The simplicity of the Saxon tenures was destroyed. A tract of country, which had been parcelled out among twenty-eight lords, now became subject to one; and all the intricacies of feodal dependence, all the rigours of feodal exaction, wardships, reliefs, escheats, &c., were introduced at once. Yet the Saxon lords, though dependent, were not in general actually stripped of their fees. By successive steps, however, the origin of all landed property within the hundred, some later copyholds excepted, is to be traced to voluntary concessions from the Lacies, or their successors of the house of Lancaster; not grants of pure beneficence, but requiring personal service from the owners, and yearly customs or payments, equivalent at that time to their value. Their present worth grew out of the operation of causes little understood in these ages either by lord or vassal—namely, the certainty of the possession, the diminishing value of money, and the perpetuity of the title.

In four generations, or little more than one hundred years, the line of the Lacies became extinct. Roger Fitz-Eustace, lord of Halton and constable of Chester, coming into possession by right of his grandmother Awbrey, uterine sister of Robert De Lacy, the last of this illustrious race. Fitz-Eustace, however, took the title of De Lacy; but in the fourth descent from him the very name was lost. Henry de Lacy, the last and greatest man of his line, dying the 5th February, 1310, left one daughter only, who had married, during her father's lifetime, Thomas Plantagenet, Earl of Lancaster—and carried along with her an inheritance even then estimated at 10,000 marks per annum. On the earl's attainder, the honour of Clitheroe, with the rest of his possessions, were forfeited to the crown. After undergoing many changes while it continued a member of the Duchy of

Lancaster—that is, until the restoration of Charles II.—that prince, in consideration of the great services of General Monk, whom he created Duke of Albemarle, bestowed it upon him and his heirs for ever. Christopher, his son, dying without issue, left his estates to his wife, daughter and co-heiress of Henry Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle; by her they were bequeathed to her second husband, Ralph, Duke of Montague, whose grand-daughter, Mary, married George, Earl of Cardigan, afterwards Duke of Montague. Elizabeth, his daughter, married Henry, Duke of Buccleuch, in whose family the honour of Clitheroe is now vested.

Clitheroe Castle is described by Grose as "situated on the summit of a conical insulated crag of rugged limestone rock, which suddenly rises from a fine vale, in which towards the north, at the distance of half-a-mile, runs the Ribble, and a mile to the south stands Pendle Hill, which seems to lift its head above the clouds."

In the time of the Commonwealth it was dismantled by order of Parliament; the chapel has totally disappeared; and nothing now remains but the square keep and some portions of the strong wall by which the building was surrounded."* The tower, though much undermined, remains firm as the rock on which it was built.

It was midnight; and the priest was chanting the service and requiem for the dead in the little chapel or chantry of St. Michael, which was built within the walls of Clyderhow or Clitheroe Castle. The *Dies iræ* from the surrounding worshippers rose in a simple monotone, like the sound of some distant river, now caught on the wing of the tempest and flung far away into the dim and distant void, now rushing on the ear in one deep gush of harmony—the voice of Nature, as if her thousand tongues were blended in one universal peal of praise and adoration to the great Power that called her into being. Many a heart quailed with apprehension, many a bosom was oppressed with doubtful and anxious forebodings. Robert de Lacy,

* Baine's *Lancashire*.

the last of this illustrious race, fourth in descent from Ilbert de Lacy, on whom the Conqueror bestowed the great fee of Pontefract, the owner of twenty-eight manors and lord of the honour of Clitheroe, was no longer numbered with the living; and here in the chapel of this lone fortress, before the dim altar, all that remained of this powerful baron, the clay no longer instinct with spirit, was soon to be enveloped in the dust, the darkness, and the degradation of its kindred earth.

Many circumstances rendered this scene more than usually solemn and affecting. Robert de Lacy had died without issue to inherit these princely domains, the feudal inheritance of a family whose power had so wide a grasp, that it was currently said the Lacies might pass from Clitheroe Castle to their fortress at Pontefract, a journey of some fifty miles, and rest in a house or hostelrie of their own at every pause during their progress.

With him ended the male line of this great family. Failing in issue, he had devised all these vast estates to Awbrey, his uterine sister, daughter of Robert de Lizours, married to Richard Fitz-Eustace, lord of Halton and constable of Chester.

Thus ended the last of his race; and the inheritance had passed to a stranger.

The surrounding worshippers were mostly domestics and retainers of the family, save Robert de Whalley, the dean of that ancient church, supposed to have been founded by Augustine or Paulinus in the seventh century, and then called "The White Church under the Leigh." No tidings had been heard from the Fitz-Eustace at Halton, and in two days the body was to be carried forth on its last pilgrimage to Kirkstall Abbey, founded by Henry de Lacy, father of the deceased, about forty years prior to this event.

The beginning of February, in the year 1193, when our story commences, was an epoch memorable for the base and treacherous captivity of Richard Cœur de Lion by the Duke of Austria; and for the equally base and

treacherous, but short-lived, usurpation of John, the brother of our illustrious crusader. The nation was involved in great trouble and dismay. The best blood of England and the flower of her nobility had perished on the deserts of Palestine, or were pining there in hopeless captivity. The house of Fitz-Eustace, into whose possession the estates of the Lacies were now merged, had themselves been shorn of a goodly scion or two from the family tree during these "holy wars."

Richard Fitz-Eustace, the husband of Awbrey, died about the 24 Hen. II (1178), leaving one son, John, who founded the Cistercian Abbey of Stanlaw in Cheshire, the present establishment of Whalley. He was slain at Tyre in the crusade, A.D. 1190, the second of the reign of Richard I, leaving issue, Richard a leper, and Roger, who followed his father to the Holy Land, but of whose fate no tidings had been heard since his departure thence on his return to Europe. Besides these were two sons, Eustace and Peter, and a daughter named Alice.

Roger Fitz-Eustace and his friend William de Bellamonte—from whom are descended the Beaumonts of Whitley-Beaumont, in Yorkshire—had fought side by side at the memorable siege of Acre; but whether alive or dead the certainty was not yet known, though there might be good grounds for the apprehension generally entertained, that they were held in captivity by infidels or by princes miscalled Christian, the bitterest enemies to the faith they professed.

Clitheroe castle was built by Roger de Poictou, or, as he is otherwise called, Roger Pictavensis, of a noble family in Normandy, and related to the Conqueror. He led the centré of William's army at the battle of Hastings. King William having given him all the lands between the Mersey and the Ribble, he built several castles and fortresses therein, providing largely for his followers, from whom are descended many families who are still in possession of manors and estates origin-

ally granted by this unfortunate relative of the Conqueror. He was twice deprived of his honours, many of them being escheated to the crown, while Clitheroe Castle, together with the great fee of Pontefract, was bestowed on Ilbert de Lacy, a Norman follower of William.

In a country not abounding with strong positions, an insulated conical rock of limestone rising out of the fertile plain between Penhull (Pendle) and the Ribble would naturally attract the attention of the invaders. Here, therefore, we find a fortress erected even earlier than the castle at Lancaster. The summit of this rock was not sufficiently extensive to admit of a spacious building, and probably nothing more was at first intended than a temporary retreat and defence from the predatory incursions of the Scots. The structure was, however, gradually enlarged, and became one of the chief residences of the Lacies. A lofty flanking wall ran along the brink of the rock, enclosing the keep and adjoining buildings, likewise the chapel of St. Michael, coeval with the foundation of the castle, and forming part of it, being amply endowed by the founder, and licence procured from the Dean of Whalley for the purpose of having divine service performed and the sacraments administered therein to the household servants, foresters, and shepherds who occupied these extensive and thinly-inhabited domains.

In this little sanctuary now lay the remains of its lord. The cold February sleet pattered fitfully against the narrow panes ; and the shivering mourners muffled themselves in their dark hoods, while they knelt devoutly on the hard, bare pavement of the chapel. Oliver de Worsthorn, the old seneschal, knelt at the foot of the bier ; his white locks covered his thin features like a veil, hiding their intense and heart-withering expression. He felt without a stay or helper in his last hours—a sapless, worthless stem in this wilderness of sorrow.

Robert, the Dean of Whalley, attended as chief mourner. Being descended from a distant branch of the Lacies, he had long thrown a covetous glance towards the inheritance. A frequent guest at the castle, he had been useful as an auxiliary in the management and control of the secular concerns; the spiritual interests of its head were in the keeping of another and more powerful agent, little suspected by the dean of applying the influence he had acquired to purposes of secular aggrandisement.

It may not be deemed irrelevant that we give a brief outline of the constitution or office of dean, as then held by the incumbents of Whalley. The beautiful abbey, now in ruins, was not as yet built. Some Saxon lord of Þpælleȝ had, about the seventh century, founded a parish church, dedicated to All Saints, called The White Church under the Leigh. The first erection was of wood, many years afterwards replaced by a plain building of stone. The rectors or deans were also lords of the town, and married men, who held it not by presentation from the patron, but as their own patrimonial estate, the succession being hereditary. In this manner the deanery of Whalley was continued until the Lateran Council, in the year 1215, which, by finally prohibiting the marriage of ecclesiastics, put an end to this order of hereditary succession, and occasioned a resignation of the patronage to the chief lord of the fee, after which the church of Whalley sunk, by two successive appropriations, into an impoverished vicarage.

Long before the Conquest the advowson had become far more valuable than the manor; and the lords, who were also patrons, saw the advantage and convenience of qualifying themselves by inferior orders for holding so rich a benefice; and thus the manor itself in time ceased to be considered as a lay fee, and became confounded with the glebe of the church.*

* Whitaker's *History of Whalley*.

The office of dean, at the period in which our history commences, had for centuries been considered as a dignity rather secular than ecclesiastical, and the pursuits of the incumbent had doubtless assimilated generally with those of his lay associates. Indeed, it is recorded that Dean Liulphus, in the reign of Canute, had the name of Cutwulph, from having cut off a wolf's tail whilst hunting in the forest of Rossendale, at a place called Ledmesgreve, or more properly Deansgreve. Like many other ancient and dignified ecclesiastics, they were mighty hunters, enjoying their privileges unmolested through a vast region of forest land then unenclosed, and were only inferior in jurisdiction to the feudal lords of these domains. "On the whole, then, it appears," says Dr. Whitaker, "that the Dean of Whalley was compounded of patron, incumbent, ordinary and lord of the manor; an assemblage which may possibly have met in later times, and in some places of exempt jurisdiction, but at that time probably an *unique* in the history of the English church."

Robert de Whalley, the incumbent before named, was not a whit behind his progenitors in that laudable exercise of worldly wisdom and forethought, as it regarded matters of a temporal and transitory nature. His bearing was proud, and his aspect keen; his form was muscular, and more fitted for some hardy and rigorous exercise than for the generally self-denying and peaceful offices of the Catholic Church. In his youth he had the reputation of being much disposed to gallantry; and the same proneness to intrigue was yet manifest, though employed in pursuits of a less transitory nature. His disappointment was, in consequence, greatly augmented when these long-coveted possessions were given to another, and his ambitious dreams dissipated. Yet was he not without hope that the succession of the Fitz-Eustace family might be frustrated. The leper would of necessity be passed over, and Roger being either dead or in captivity, the revenues

and usurpation of this distant and almost inaccessible territory might still be enjoyed without molestation or inquiry. Such were the meditations of this plotting ecclesiastic, as he knelt before the altar in that solemn hour, in the chapel of "*St. Michael in Castro.*"

The walls of the chapel, or rather chantry, were smeared with black; and in front of the screen were portrayed uncouth representations of the arms and insignia of the deceased. A pall was thrown over the body, and a plate of salt, as an emblem of incorruptibility, placed on the corpse—a heathenish custom borrowed from the Druids. The candles burnt dimly at the little altar, and the cold and bitter wind threw the shadows in many a grotesque and startling shape on the dark bare walls which enclosed them. It was an hour and a scene that superstition might have chosen for manifesting her power; and many an anxious glance was thrown towards the dark recesses out of which imagination was ready to conjure some grim spectre, invested with all the horrors that monkish legends had created. The priest who officiated was an unbeneficed clergyman, long known as an inmate of the castle. He was of a quiet and inoffensive disposition, but much attached to his lord; often during the service grief stayed his utterance and he mingled his loud sobs with those of the surrounding worshippers.

The *dirage* was concluded, and vespers for the dead were now commencing with the "*Placebo Domino.*" The priest with his loud rich voice sang or recited the anthem, and the attendants gave the response in a low and muttering sound. Just as he was beginning the fumigation with a sign of the cross, to drive away demons and unclean spirits from the body, suddenly a loud, deep, and startling blast was heard from the horn at the outer gate. The whole assembly started up from their devotions, and every eye was turned towards the dean, as though to watch and take the colour of their proceedings from those of his reverence. He lifted

his eyes from the corpse, which lay with the face and shoulders uncovered; and, as if startled from some bewildering reverie, cried aloud:

"What untimely visitor art thou, disturbing the sad offices of the dead?"

He paused, as though the sound of his own voice had disturbed him; while wrapping himself in his cloak, he hastily approached Oliver, who stood irresolute, not knowing how to act in this unexpected emergency. De Whalley pointed towards the door, and the seneschal prepared to obey, accompanied by the porter with a light, and one or two attendants.

Immediately outside the chapel the way led down a steep angle of the rock, which Oliver, by dint of much use and experience, descended without any apparent difficulty, save what arose from the slippery state of the path, which rendered the footing more than usually precarious and uncertain.

Again, the blast brayed forth a louder and more impatient summons, startling the echoes from their midnight slumber, while the deep woods answered from a thousand unseen recesses.

"Hang thee for a saucy loon, whoever thou be! I'll warrant thee as much impudence in thy face as wind i' thy muzzle," said the disturbed seneschal. "Tarry a while, Hugo; ope not the gate without a parley, despite the knave's untimely summons."

Oliver, hobbling onward, reached the wicket, just then occupied by Hugo's broad and curious face prying out cautiously into the misty and unintelligible void, without being a whit the wiser for his scrutiny.

"What a plague do ye keep honest men a-waiting for at the gate," said a gruff voice from the pitchy darkness without, "in a night that would make a soul wish for a dip into purgatory, just by way of a warming?"

"Hush," said Oliver, who was a true son of the Church, and moreover, being fresh from the services

appointed for the recovery of poor souls from this untoward place, felt the remark of the stranger as peculiarly impious and full of blasphemy—"Hush! thou bold-faced scorner, and learn to furbish thy wit from some other armoury; we like not such unholy jests—firebrands thrown in sport! Thy business, friend?"

"Open the gate, good master priest-poke," said the other, in a tone of authority.

"Not until thou showest thine errand," said the equally imperative interrogator within; who, having the unequivocal and somewhat ponderous advantage of a pair of stout-built and well-furnished gates to back, or rather face, him in the controversy, was consequently in a fair way for keeping on the strong side of the argument.

"Now, o' my troth, but ye be a pair of rude curs, barking from a warm kennel at your betters, who are shivering in the cold, without so much as a bone to pick, or a wisp of straw to their tails! Well, well, 'tis soon said; every dog, you know—and 'twill be my turn soon. I come hither from the castle at Halton, where my Lady Fitz-Eustace would lay your curs' noses to the grinding-stone, but, rest her soul, she will not long be above ground, I trow. Know then, masters, I am her seneschal, whom she sends with a good train to the burying. Quick, old goat-face, or we will singe thy beard to light thee to our discovery."

The gates were immediately unbolted at this command, opening wide before so dignified a personage, who, as the representative of the Fitz-Eustace, was evidently impressed with a sufficient sense of his own importance, while he and his attendants rode through the grim Norman arch into the courtyard. The uppermost extreme of this illustrious functionary was surmounted with a sort of Phrygian-shaped bonnet or cap, made of deer-skin, suitably ornamented. A mantle or cloak of a dark mulberry colour, fancifully embroidered on the hem, was clasped upon one shoulder by a silver

buckle. Underneath was a short upper riding-tunic made of coarse woollen, partly covering an under vest, made of finer materials. A leathern girdle was buckled round his loins, having sundry implements attached thereto, requisite during the performance of so long a journey through a thinly-inhabited region. The upper garment scarcely covered the knee, over which stockings of red cloth were seen, reaching half-way up the thigh; round the leg were bandages or cross-garterings well bespattered with mud; low boots or buskins protected the feet and ankles; to these spurs were fastened, the head being spear-shaped and something crooked in the shank. His beard was forked, and this appendage, apparently the result of a careful and anxious cultivation, he occasionally twisted with one hand whilst speaking. He carried a lance, or rather hunting-spear, which he wielded with an air of great formality and display; his followers were likewise furnished each of them with a cloak and tunic, and a conical cap of coarse felt tied under the chin with a leathern band: a girdle of the same material was buckled round the waist, with a scrip and other necessaries for the journey. They rode horses of the Welsh breed, small and stout-built; spoil captured, in all probability, from that rebellious and unruly nation.

The entry of this armed train was more like an act of taking possession than that of peaceable and formal embassage; and the newly-arrived seneschal soon began to exercise the office of governor or castellan, seizing the reins of government with an iron grasp. He was a square, carroty-headed personage, about the middle size, and of a ruddy aspect. He held an office of trust under the Fitz-Eustace, and, spite of his saucy garrulity, in which he indulged on most occasions, he was faithful, and would have challenged and immolated anyone who had dared to question the right of the Fitz-Eustace to precedence before any other baron of the land. Long service rendered him more intrusive, than would

have been thought becoming, or even excusable in any other enjoying less of his mistress's confidence.

"Now, my merry men all," said this authoritative personage, "a long and a weary path have we ridden to-day; and had we not been, as it were, lost in your savage wilderness—where our guide, whom we forced before us by dint of blows and hard usage, could scarce keep us in the right track—we had been here before sunset. Thanks to this saint of yours, whosoever he be, for we saw the watchlights at times from the chapel, as we guessed, else had we been longer in hitting our mark, and might, peradventure, have supped with the wolves on a haunch of venison. Now for the stables. What! have ye no knaves hereabout to help our followers with the beasts?"

Oliver, much troubled at this loquacious and unceremonious address, replied with some acrimony:

"The household are in the chapel, where it had been better thou hadst let us bide, and given the corpse a quiet watchnight—the vigils for the dead are not ended."

"Go to, master seneschal, for of this post I do adjudge thee, and reverence thine office in respect of mine own, but let dead men make their own lanterns; we must have supper anyhow, and that right speedily."

Oliver, after seeing the gate secured, sent Hugo for help, whilst he led the way himself into the hall of this once formidable fortress. It was high and gloomy, the fire being apparently extinguished. A step on the floor showed where the higher table was placed, prohibiting those beneath a certain rank from advancing upon the skirts of their superiors; an indispensable precaution, when servants and retainers of all sorts ate their meals with the master of the feast. Perches for hawks, in form like unto a crutch, were placed behind his chair; for these birds were usually taught to sit hoodless in the evening among company undisturbed. Hunting-spears, jackets, chain-armour, shields, and helmets

decorated the walls; and many a goodly heritage of antlers hung, like forest boughs, stripped of their verdure. There were two oriels furnished with leaning-stones for the convenience of loungers. Painted glass filled the higher portions of the windows, representing uncouth heads, hands, feet, and bodies of saints, in all the glowing and gorgeous magnificence which the beam of heaven can give to colours of more than earthly brightness, though disposed in forms of more than childish absurdity.

The hall, the usual rendezvous of the stronghold, was now deserted for the dread solemnities of that cheerless night. But the stranger was much discouraged by reason of the coldness and gloom, shivering audibly at the comfortless appearance that was before him.

"St. Martin's malison light on ye—fire, billets, and all—I've seen nothing like to warm my bare nose and knuckles since we left Halton, two long days agone. Verily, to my thinking, there's as much timber burnt there daily as ye would pile here for a winter's use."

"Prithee come with me into the kitchen, we may have better quarters peradventure among the flesh-pots," said Oliver, leading the stranger through a small doorway on the left. This *coquinus* of our ancestors was usually placed near the hall, for the convenience of serving. Here, through a sliding aperture in the panel, the victuals were transferred with safety and despatch. It was built entirely of stone, having a conical roof with a turret at the top for the escape of steam and smoke. A fire was still burning, provided with a large caldron suspended on a sort of versatile gibbet, by which contrivance it could be withdrawn from the flame. Fire-rakes and fire-jacks were laid on the hearth, and around the walls were iron pots, trivets, pans, kettles, ladles, platters, and other implements of domestic economy. Huge dressers displayed symptoms of preparation for to-morrow's necessities, and a coarse

kitchen-wench was piling fuel on the ever-burning fire.

The envoy, glad to be ensconced so near the blaze, quickly addressed himself to the task of improving it by a dexterous use of a huge faggot by way of poker. He had thrown off his upper clothing; and the grim walls soon reddened with the rising glow. So intent was he on an occupation which he evidently enjoyed, that he was not aware when Oliver departed, the latter slipping off unobserved to the chapel for the purpose of informing the dean of this arrival.

In one part of the kitchen was a long, low-roofed recess, accessible only by a ladder, wherein dried meats, consisting of bacon, ham, deers' tongues, mutton, venison, and other dainties of the like nature, were stored. To this inviting receptacle was the attention of our guest more especially directed. Without ceremony or invitation he ascended, and drawing out a formidable weapon from his belt, he commenced a furious attack.

Oliver, on his return, found this worthy usurping the functions of both cook and consumer of the victual with great assiduity. He was accompanied by the dean, who addressed the intruder as follows:

"How is it that we have none from the noble house of Fitz-Eustace save thou and thy company?"

The messenger looked askance from his occupation, disposing of a large mouthful of the viands with sufficient deliberation ere he vouchsafed a reply.

"Me and my company! As goodly a band, I trow, as ever put foot to stirrup or fist to crupper! yet will I resolve thy question plain as Beeston Castle. My lady is old, and her only son died long ago on a crusade. Her third grandson, now in the office of constable, is out amongst the Welsh—plague on their fiery blood!—by reason of the absence of his elder brother, Roger, yet abroad in these Holy Wars. Of the eldest born, Richard, we know not but that he is deceased. He

left the castle many years ago, sorely afflicted, for he was a leper. So that, peradventure, my lady hath sent the best man she had, inasmuch as I am steward and seneschal, being appointed thereto through her ladyship's great wisdom and discretion."

Here he surveyed himself with an air of indescribable assurance and satisfaction.

"And, saving your presence," continued the deputy, "I come here as castellan, or governor, until he whose right it is shall possess it."

"And how know we that we be not opening our gates and surrendering our castle to some losel knave, whose only title may lie on the tip of his tongue, and his right on the end of his rapier?"

"By this token," said the seneschal haughtily, at the same time drawing out a formal instrument, to which was appended the broad seal of the ancient house of Fitz-Eustace.

The dean cast his eyes over the document, returning it to the messenger without either answer or inquiry, and immediately retired from the presence of this usurper on his long-coveted possessions.

Much chagrined by so unexpected an interference, he left the castle, even at this untimely hour. Yet his footsteps were not bent towards the shadows of his own roof, the deanery at Whalley.

Outside the castle wall, and on the steepest side of the hill, was a little hermitage, wherein dwelt one of those reputed saints that dealt in miracles and prayers for the benefit of the "true believers." Many of these solitaries were well skilled in craft and intrigue; others, doubtless, deceived themselves as well as others in the belief that Heaven had granted them the power to suspend and control the operations of nature. To this habitation, occupied by one of these holy santons of the Church, were the steps of the dean immediately directed. He raised the latch as though accustomed to this familiarity. The chamber, a high, narrow cell,

scooped out of the rock, was quite dark ; but the voice was heard, a deep sepulchral tone, as though issuing from the ground :

" Art thou here so soon, De Whalley ? "

" Sir Ulphilas," said the intruder hastily, and with some degree of agitation, " canst work miracles now ? The Canaanites are come into the land to possess it ; nor will threatenings and conjurations drive them forth."

" I know it," said the hermit, who, though unseen, had not, it seems, been an inattentive observer of the events of the last two hours. A light suddenly shot forth, enkindled as if by magic, showing the tall gaunt form of the " Holy Hermit of the Rock." He was dressed in a long grey garment of coarse woollen. It was said that he wore an iron corslet next his skin, for mortification, it was thought by the vulgar ; but whether for this purpose, or for one of a more obvious nature, it would perhaps be easy to surmise. A girdle of plaited horse-hair encompassed his thin attenuated form. His head was uncovered ; and he seemed to have just risen from his couch, a board or shelf, raised only a few inches from the rock on which it lay. His eye was wild, quick, and sparkling ; but his cheek was deadly pale, and his features collapsed and haggard in their expression.

" I have dreamed a dream," said the visionary.

" And to what end ? " inquired his visitor, seating himself with great deliberation.

" Nay, 'twas not a dream," continued the hermit : " St. Michael stood before me this blessed night, arrayed as thou seest him portrayed in the glass of his holy chapel above. His armour was all bright and glistering, and his sword a devouring flame. He flapped his wings thrice ere he departed, and said unto me, ' Arise, Ulphilas, and work, for thine hour is come ! "

" And what the better am I," said the irreverent priest, " for this saintly revelation ? I must work, too, or——"

"Hold," said the hermit, laying his hand on the other's shoulder with great solemnity; "speak not unadvisedly with thy lips; there be created intelligences within hearing that thou little knowest of."

"Thou didst promise; but verily the substance hath slidden from my grasp; whilst I, fond fool, embraced a shadow. Cajoled by thine assurance, that my blood should be with the proud current that inherits these domains, I forbore, and let thee work. But thou hast been a traitor to my cause, I do verily suspect; nay, accuse thee of this fraud. Thy machinations and thy counsel were the cause. By thine accursed arts Robert de Lacy hath left his patrimony to a stranger!"

"True, I counselled him thus. What then?"

"I and mine are barred from the inheritance!"

"Shall the word of the Hermit of the Rock fall to the ground? Have I not promised that thy blood shall be with those that inherit these domains?"

"Promises are slender food for an hungry stomach," cried the unbeliever.

"If the promise fail, blame thy dastardly fears, and not my power. Thou shalt see the promised land thou shalt not inherit. Thy son shall receive the blessing."

The dean looked for a moment as though he could have fawned and supplicated for a reversion of the decree; but pride or anger had the mastery.

"And so," cried he, "thou findest thy predictions run counter to thy schemes, perdie; for thou dost mock me in them with a double sense."

"How, false one? Have I not wrought for thee? Hath not he, whose corpse even now resteth in hope, overwhelmed thee with his favours through my counsel and contrivance? I owed thee a service, for thou wast my stay and sustenance when driven hither an outcast from the haunts of men. But thoughtest thou that I should pander to thy lust, and hew out a pathway to thy desire?"

"To me this!" said the covetous intruder, his voice quivering with rage.

"Yes, to thee, Robert de Whalley," replied the hermit: "because thou hast not leaped the last height of thine ambition, forsooth—because thou art not lord of these wide domains, through my interest and holy communion with the departed—and because I have not basely sold myself to thee, thou art offended. Beware lest the endowment be wrested from thy grasp, the glebe and manor pass away from thine inheritance."

"Thou hadst the privity and counsel of the deceased, and a whisper would have made it mine," said the dean, with great dejection.

"Greedy and unblushing as thou art, know it was I who counselled him, and the deed is in my keeping. I sent a secret message unto Halton with the news, and Roger de Fitz-Eustace will be here anon!"

"Thou dreamest; he is in bondage, or slain at Ascalon."

"He will reappear," replied the hermit, "and the banner of the Fitz-Eustace wave on yonder turret. Hence! ungrateful member of our holy communion;—to thy house, and let an old man rest in peace."

The disappointed priest departed in great haste; terror, of which he could not divest himself, and for which he could not account, overpowered him in the presence of the hermit. He durst not provoke him further; but as he crossed the courtyard again a glimpse of hope shot suddenly on his soul.

"In thy keeping!" He spoke scarcely above his breath; but the walls seemed to give back the sound. He started like some guilty thing at the discovery of its crime.

Before morning light on the following day the castle bell began to toll. Preparations were making for the conveyance of the last of the Lacies to the Abbey of Kirkstall, a journey which would occupy the greater part of two successive days. The pathway over the

hills was narrow, and the mode of conveyance difficult, if not dangerous. A sort of litter was made for the corpse, and slung on a pole between two horses, covered, as in a bier, with the pall and trappings. A sword of ceremony was carried in front; the dean rode immediately before the body, the chanters preceding, and a priest with the cross and censer. Behind came the male domestics, and the seneschal of Halton with his train.

Psalms were sung at every halting-place, and in the villages through which they passed, and torches were kept lighted during the greater part of the journey. These were for the purpose of being extinguished in the earth that should finally cover the body.

Thus attired, and thus attended, was this once powerful baron conveyed to his narrow dwelling-house in the dust.

We will not follow them further, nor detail the pomp of the funeral rites, that last mockery of greatness, but return to existing objects and events—man's ever-gnawing ambition; so vast, when living, that the whole earth is too narrow for its sphere; when dead, the veriest churl hath as wide a possession!

Weeks and months passed away, and the raw February wind grew soft in the warm and joyous impulse of another spring. One night, about the hour of vespers, two men, habited in monkish apparel, came to the cell of the Hermit of the Rock. After the usual salutation they entered, carrying with them staff and scrip, as if bent on a long and weary travel.

"Whence come ye, and whither bound?" said the hermit, surveying the intruders by the light of a solitary lamp that was burning in a niche, wherein stood a skull and crucifix, emblems of our faith and our mortality.

"We are from the Abbey of Stanlaw, on our way to Kirkstall in the morning."

"Wherefore abide ye here? There is lodging and better cheer withal in the castle above."

"We are under a vow, and rest not save on holy ground; we crave thy hospitality, therefore, and shelter for the night."

"Is your errand to Kirkstall hidden, or is it an open embassage?"

"The Lady Fitz-Eustace sendeth greeting by our ministry unto the holy abbot through our superior at Stanlaw, beseeching that he would make diligent inquiry touching the will of Robert de Lacy, once lord of this goodly heritage. She hath had news of his demise, and likewise another message with an assurance that every of these possessions have been devised to the Fitz-Eustace by his last will and testament. Yet this writing she has not yet seen, nor knoweth she into whose custody it hath been given. Apprehending the great favours which the Cistercian house at Kirkstall hath received from the Lacies, and the close intimacy which the abbot once enjoyed, she doth conjecture that, in all likelihood, the testament is in his keeping."

"Your journey hath need of none other reference, for the will is in my custody."

"In thine, Sir Ulphilas?"

"How! know ye my name already!" said the hermit sharply, and a fierce glance shot from under his high and pallid brow.

"Holy St. Agatha! and has not the fame and sanctity of the Hermit of the Rock gone forth to many lands! Where the broad Mersey and the silver Dee roll their bright waters, thou art known by thy holiness and thy faith."

"And how is our good brother Roger, abbot of your monastery at Stanlaw?" inquired the hermit, not deigning to notice their fulsome and flattering epithets.

"Holy Virgin! how knowest thou his name?"

"And hath not the fame of your holy abbot, and the sanctity of your house, reached us even here?" said the hermit, with a look of scrutiny and scorn. The visitors

were silent. The hermit seized the lamp, and surveyed their persons with much care and deliberation.

"Holy father," said the abashed intruders, "we crave thy blessing, and moreover a share of thy pittance, for our way hath been long and toilsome: since yesterday our journeying hath been over hills and through deep forests, infested by wolves and noisome beasts, which we had much ado to escape."

The hermit drew a little table from the recess, blowing the wan embers until a cheerful blaze flashed brightly through the cell. He then opened a cupboard scooped out of the solid rock, and took thence a scrap of hard cheese, a barley cake, and a few parched peas, with which the holy men commenced their supper. They ate their meal in silence, washing down the dainties with a draught from the spring. When the repast was finished, one of the brethren thus addressed his host:

"And what shall be thy message to our holy abbot? Wilt thou send the parchments to his grace?"

"Nay, brethren, that is not my purpose."

Another and a brief pause ensued.

"But the message?"

"Say that the will is here"—he looked towards his bosom as he spoke—"and at the appointed hour it shall be ready. When Roger de Fitz-Eustace comes hither, his claim shall be duly certified."

"Alas!" said the wayfaring guests in a tone of deep sorrow and apprehension, "he went on a warfare against the infidels."

"He will return," was the reply.

"The Virgin grant him a safe deliverance! but he tarrieth long, and a rumour hath lately been abroad that he fell at Ascalon."

"'Tis false!" cried the hermit, roused to an unexpected burst of wrath. His eyes kindled with rage, and he darted a glance at the intruders which made them cower and shrink from his rebuke. In a moment he grew calm, relapsing into his usual moody and

thoughtful attitude. Taking courage, they again addressed him.

"Is this thy message to the abbot of Stanlaw? If so, our errand hath but a sorry recompense."

"And what recompense should fall to the lot of miscreants like ye?" said the hermit, surveying them with a contemptuous glance. "I hear the sound of your master's feet behind ye. Tell Robert, the proud Dean of Whalley, that when he sends ye next on so goodly an errand, to see that ye con your lesson more carefully, else will ye be known for a couple of errant knaves as ever went a-mousing into an owl's nest! Hence, begone!" said the hermit, as he drave them from his threshold; and the counterfeit monks went back to Whalley in haste, reporting the ill success of their mission.

"Nevertheless," said De Whalley, "I have some clue to the search, if the glance of his eye, which these varlets have reported, do show truly where the treasure is hidden. I will foil the old fox yet with his own weapons."

This comfortable reflection, in all probability, moderated his anger at the unskilful disposition of his messengers, whom he dismissed with little ceremony from his presence.

In the meantime the new castellan was exercising his power with unsparing and immoderate severity. Oliver de Wortshorn was almost heartbroken; the old man suddenly found himself reduced to the condition of a mere dependant on the self-will and caprice of this petty tyrant, his authority having been usurped, and his office wrested from him, by the hand of a stranger. Adam de Dutton* was the name of this new functionary,

* At the commencement of a list of "*Senescalli de Blackburnshire*" occurs the name of "*Adam de Dutton, temp. Rog. et Joh. de Lacy.*" Dr. Whitaker says: "This Adam de Dutton is one of the witnesses to the foundation-charter of Stanlaw, A.D. 1178; and a Dominus Adam occurs as steward in the charters of John de Lacy, who succeeded Roger A.D. 1211; so

and he rode it out bravely over the necks of the servants and retainers, discharging some, punishing others, and making the whole community groan beneath the iron yoke of his oppression. Had there been a master-spirit to wield the elements of conspiracy, and unite the several members so as to act from one common impulse, matters were just ripe for rebellion.

Early in the morning, after a day of more than ordinary discipline, Oliver bent his feeble steps to the hermitage. He laid his complaints before the occupier of the cell, who was ever ready to administer aid and comfort to the afflicted.

"Take little heed of the deputy now," said the holy man, "his master will be here anon. I hear the tramp of armed men, with the herald's trumpet. I see the red griffin, and the banner of the Fitz-Eustace."

"But, holy father, Sir Ulphilas," replied the ejected steward, "there is no peace either by night or day, and we are nigh worn out with his waywardness and oppression. If it might be that your reverence would come with me, peradventure the churl would grow tame at your presence."

The hermit, complying with this importunity, accompanied Oliver to the castle.

In the hall Adam de Dutton was about consigning one of the villains, for some venial offence, unto the whipping-post and the stocks. The accused besought his inexorable judge for some remission of the sentence, falling on his knees before him just as the hermit, with great solemnity, entered the hall. His face was partly concealed by a large hood, and little of his countenance was visible above the long beard which flowed over his bosom, and the fire of his eye, which seemed to glow through the dark shadows beneath.

"Whom bring ye next for our disposal?" inquired

that, if both these names design the same person, which I believe, he must have held the office of seneschal at least thirty-three years."

the castellan ; but there was no answer ; every eye was directed to the hermit, who came slowly forward, standing opposite to, and within a very short distance from, the dread arbiter of justice in the castle of the Lacies.

" What brings thee to our presence ? Back to thy sanctuary ; else we may deal with thee as with other knaves who live by their wits and the witlessness of fools."

" What hath this man done amiss ? " inquired the hermit, in a tone that showed his meekness to be disturbed, and his wrath evidently kindling ; nor would the thunder be long ere it followed the flash.

" It is our pleasure ! " answered Adam de Dutton, reddening with rage ; " and furthermore our pleasure is, that thou get thee to thy cell, or, by the beard of St. Michael, my bowmen shall help thee thither when this fellow hath had his allowance at their hands."

" Fool ! " cried the hermit, in a voice which struck terror through the assembly ; and even the judge himself started back with amazement.

" Begone, child ! " said Ulphilas to the culprit ; " I dismiss thee of the punishment ; peradventure thou hast deserved to suffer, but I give to this emissary a timely warning thereby."

The criminal was not loth to obey, disappearing speedily without hindrance, while the spectators were mute with amazement. The hermit, too, was silent before the usurper, who, almost frantic with vexation, cried out :

" Seize him !—help, for the Fitz-Eustace !—treason against our Lady of Halton ! "

Uttering many rapid and incoherent expressions, he approached the hermit, who stood unmoved, apparently the only unconcerned spectator in the rising tumult. The seneschal's guards were already in motion, but Adam was the first who attempted the seizure.

The holy man drew back, as though from some touch of pollution.

"Hold!" cried he, "one touch and 'tis thy last. Rash fool, thou hast provoked this rebuke!"

The hand of the seneschal had scarcely been put forth, when, lo! the astonished deputy shrank back in dismay. A sudden change came over his angry countenance—a look of surprise mingled with horror, as though he could have wished the earth to gape and hide him from the objects of his apprehensions. He stood trembling, speechless, pale as ashes, expecting immediate and condign punishment. So suddenly this change was wrought that the spectators fancied it to be some direct interposition from heaven; concluding that he was smitten for the sacrilegious and profane hand he had dared to stretch toward this holy man. Yet was the change not so sudden but that a quick-eyed observer, if such were there, might have seen the hermit's outer garment loosened for a moment, and a significant whisper which the other evidently heard with such visible tokens of alarm.

Ulphilas immediately retired to his cell, and from that hour the castellan discharged his official duties evidently under the control of some overmastering influence or apprehension.

Not long afterwards it was rumoured abroad that tidings had been heard from Roger de Fitz-Eustace, who was supposed either to be in captivity or to have fallen at the siege of Ascalon.

The king was still detained in prison by the Emperor Henry VI, and it was only through the remonstrance of the German princes, and a threat of excommunication from the Pope, that Henry, finding he could no longer hold him in durance, concluded a treaty for his ransom at the exorbitant sum of 150,000 marks, about £300,000 of our money; of which sum two-thirds were to be paid before he received his liberty, and sixty-seven hostages delivered for the remainder. The captivity of the superior

lord was one of those cases provided for by the feudal tenures, and all vassals were, in that event, obliged to contribute towards his ransom. Twenty shillings were therefore levied on each knight's fee throughout England; but as this money came in slowly, and was not sufficient for the intended purpose, the voluntary zeal of the people readily supplied the deficiency.

The churches and monasteries melted down their plate to the amount of 30,000 marks; the bishops, abbots, and nobles paid a fourth of their yearly rent; the parochial clergy contributed a tenth to their tithes; and the requisite sum being thus collected, the queen-mother and Walter, Archbishop of Rouen, set out with it to Germany, paid the money to the emperor and the Duke of Austria at Mentz, delivered to them hostages for the remainder, and freed Richard from captivity.*

During these important negotiations two messengers arrived at Clitheroe, who, in consequence of the deputy's absence for a season, held a secret conference with the Dean of Whalley ere they departed. An order was left that the castle should be forthwith in readiness for the reception of some distinguished guest. In those days tidings travelled slowly in such thinly populated districts; like the heath-fire, which extends rapidly where the fuel is thickly strewn, but is tardy in spreading where it is less abundant.

The dean, having received the messengers, took special care that the knowledge of their arrival should be kept, if possible, from the ears and eyes of Adam de Dutton, who happened for several days at that season to be hunting in the forest, where a mighty slaughter of game—wolves, bears, and such like—was the result; in which dangerous pastime, Geoffery, the dean's only son, acted a distinguished part. This bold adventurer was accounted the most skilful hunter in the whole range

* Hume.

of these vast forests, where the venison was so strictly kept that the life of a man was held in but little estimation, comparatively, with the care and preservation of a beast.

The Deans of Whalley, as we have before seen, were mighty hunters in those days; and a wild and picturesque story is told in Dugdale's *Mon. Angl.* v. i, to which we have before alluded—to wit, that the great-grandfather of the present incumbent, Liwlphus Cutwolph, cut off a wolf's tail whilst hunting, from which he acquired this surname. Geoffery inherited a more than ordinary passion for the chase. With his bow and hunting-spear he had been known to spend many days in these deep and trackless recesses, where the feet of man rarely trod, and the wild roe and the eagle had their almost inaccessible haunts. Adam was often his only companion; the seneschal's partiality for the sport having rendered these dissimilar spirits more akin than their nature had otherwise permitted.

On the evening of a sultry day Ulphilas had thrown himself on his couch, when, without warning or intimation, the Dean of Whalley stood beside him.

"The holy hermit hath betaken himself early to his repose. How fareth he in this hard cell? 'Tis long since we have met."

"Peradventure it might have been longer, had not news travelled to thine ear touching the safety of the Fitz-Eustace and his speedy arrival," said the hermit, without so much as turning his eyes toward his visitor. Robert de Whalley stood silent and aghast. This was a direct and unequivocal testimony to the prescience of the good father, for to no ears but his own had the tidings been communicated.

"Thou knowest of his return?"

"Yes, ere the knowledge was thine," said the hermit carelessly.

"There is little use in secrecy where the very walls possess a tongue; and seeing that the first part of mine

errand is known, it may be thou art as well instructed in the latter, which is the true purport of my visit."

"I am," replied the other quickly, now for the first time fixing his eyes on the intruder, "and of the issue too, I trow."

"Ah!" said the dean, with a long-drawn exclamation of surprise, and a sudden gasp as though he would have held the secret more tightly to his bosom; "and who——"

"Nay, thou art but obeying the impulse of thy nature," said the hermit, musing. "The brutes ye hunt obey their common instinct—and thou—— Yet the ravening wolf and the cunning fox ye follow, and worry to their death."

"Death!" cried the dean; "what meanest thou?"

"Did I not counsel thee to beware? But thou wilt tumble into thine own pitfall. The trap is laid for thine own feet!"

The hermit sat on the low couch, and he gazed wildly round the cell as though pursuing some object visible only to himself.

"Give me the parchments committed to thy trust by De Lacy, and I will build a house to thy good saint, enriching it with rare endowments."

"Thou wouldest drive a thrifty bargain with Heaven. Verily thou shouldst have the best on't, though," replied the hermit, with a contemptuous smile.

"Truly I could but return to Heaven the bounties that it gave; yet would I, peradventure, build, for His honour and glory, to whom all things belong, a habitation, the like whereof hath not been seen for stateliness and grandeur," said the dean, with affected reverence and humility of spirit.

"Others may do that as well as thou."

"But will he, whose coming is now at hand, make so costly a sacrifice for the welfare of the Church? I will found an abbey, holy father, consecrate to thy patron, wherein thou shalt be the ruler. I purpose to enrich

it with half my possessions, even of those whereby, through thy ministry, I do become entitled from the death of Robert de Lacy."

"Which meaneth, if I but aid thee to rob another of some large and goodly inheritance, thou wilt give to Heaven, forsooth, a portion of what belongs not to thee."

"Once thou didst promise me thine aid."

"To robbery and rapine?"

"I have not wronged *thee!*"

"Nor I——"

"Thou hast; the inheritance is mine; thou hast robbed me of my right, but I will regain these lands or perish on them."

"And so thou mayest, unblushing traitor."

"Traitor!—ah! this word to me?"

"Yes, to thee, Robert de Whalley!"

"Thou art in my power, old man; ere I entered thy cell I left a trusty keeper at the door," cried the dean, with a grin of savage exultation.

"In thy power!—never, miscreant."

"Give the deed to my keeping, and no harm shall happen thee; refuse, and thou art my prisoner. Force may accomplish my wishes without thy compliance."

The hermit's eyes glistened like twin fires in their hollow recesses. He stood erect, confronting his visitor, who, bold in audacity and guilt, repeated his demand.

"Never!" said the hermit.

"Then die, fond dotard!" cried De Whalley; and, sudden as the lightning-stroke, he drew a dagger from his vest, aiming a blow at the hermit's bosom; but, marvellous to relate, the steel hardly penetrated the folds of his drapery, glancing back with a dull sound, his person remaining uninjured. A look of unutterable scorn curled the features of the charmed, and apparently invulnerable, being before him.

"Cowardly assassin!" he cried, "I hold thy threats at less worth than a handful of this base dust beneath

my feet, and utterly defy thy power. I am free as the untrammelled air, and thou mayest as well attempt to grasp the shadow or the sunbeam!"

Swift as the words he uttered the hermit disappeared! The effect was so sudden, aided, in all likelihood, by the dimness and obscurity of the cell, that, to the astonished apprehension of De Whalley, Ulphilas had made himself more impalpable than the air he breathed, sinking like a shadow through the rocky floor.

"Thou hast escaped me, fiend," said the dean, gnashing his teeth with vexation; "but I will overmatch thy spells: with the aid of this good hand I may yet retrieve the inheritance."

Saying this, he left the cell, and returned to his home at Whalley.

Early on the morrow the hermit entered the hall where Adam de Dutton was preparing for another expedition to the forest. The seneschal looked uneasy and surprised, but acknowledged his presence with great respect and humility.

"Adam de Dutton, thou hast other work to do," cried the holy man, "than rambling after these fools i' the forest! Thy lord will be here anon."

"How! whom meanest thou?" inquired the castellan, with a vacant stare of astonishment.

"Roger de Fitz-Eustace. He is at hand; see thou prepare to meet him."

"Surely thou mockest, Roger de——"

"Peace! The last beam of to-morrow's sun shall see the banner of the Fitz-Eustace beneath the gate."

"To-morrow! Why—how cometh my lord? Surely thou dreamest—or thy——"

"Once more I warn thee of his coming; see to his reception, or thy lord will be wroth; and Roger with the ready hand was not used to be over-nice, or loth in the administering of a rod to a fool's back."

The hermit departed without awaiting the reply.

But great was the stir and tumult in the stronghold

of the Lacies on that memorable day. The hurrying to and fro of the victuallers and cooks—the clink of armourers and the din of horses prancing in their warlike equipment—kept up an incessant jingle and confusion. A watchman was stationed on the keep, whose duty it was to give warning when the dust, curling on the wind, should betoken the approach of strangers. The guards were set, the gates properly mounted, and the drawbridge raised, so that their future lord might be admitted in due form to his possession.

The sun went gloriously down toward the wide and distant verge of the forest, and the brow of Pendle flung back his burning glance. Nature seemed to welter in a wide atmosphere of light, from which there was no escape. Panting and oppressed, the hounds lay basking by the wall, and the shaggy wolf-dog crept, with slouching gait and lolling tongue, from the glare into the shadow of some protecting buttress. The watchman sat beneath the low battlements, hardly able to direct his aching eyes towards the forest path below the hill. The monotony of this dull and weary task was reiterated until the very effort became habitual, and he could scarcely recognize or identify any change of object from the absorption of his faculties by the listlessness it created. One slight curl of dust had already escaped him, another waved softly above the trees where the path wound upwards from the valley. Again it was visible, and the watchman seemed to awaken as from a lethargy or a dream. Strangers were surely approaching, but without retinue, as the wreath of dust, from its slight continuance, would seem to intimate. Just as he came to this conclusion, two horsemen swept into view, where a broad turn of the road was visible, disappearing again rapidly behind the arched boughs of the forest.

Bounding almost headlong down the narrow stair he ran immediately to the hall, informing the deputy of what he had seen. Scarce had he concluded when a

hoarse blast from the horn rang at the outer gate. Adam de Dutton hurried to the postern, where he saw two horsemen, bearing equivocal signs of their allegiance to the renowned constable of Chester. They wore what was then considered a great novelty in dress, the tabard or *supertotus*, a sleeveless garment, consisting of only two pieces, which hung down before and behind, the sides being left open.* Low-crowned yellow caps covered their heads, and the upper tunic was yellow, richly embroidered, reaching only to the knees. They wore forked beards, well pointed, and gloves and boots of beautiful Spanish leather. Their horses were low, but of an exquisite symmetry, and the beasts were pawing and champing before the gate when Adam hastened down into the courtyard. These were avant couriers or messengers from Roger de Fitz-Eustace, whom they announced as being nigh, and to be expected ere nightfall, with his daughter Maud, a maiden much renowned for her beauty.

As the sun sank deeper into the gloom of the woods, and the shadows grew long on the green and sunny slope of the hill, the wild shrill notes of a clarion rung through the forest glades; a distant burst of martial music was heard, together with the roll of a drum—an instrument borrowed from the Saracens, and in use only after the crusades.

Now went forth Adam de Dutton and his train bareheaded to meet their lord, whom they found riding at a slow pace, conversing familiarly, but attentively, with the Dean of Whalley. Behind him came the blushing Maud on a beautiful white palfrey, and beside her a comely youth, in a fair hunting-suit, the son of De Whalley, who, by his fervid and impassioned glances, showed himself apt in other and nobler exercises than the upland chase and the forest cover could afford.

Roger de Fitz-Eustace, the terror and scourge of the

* Like the knave on playing-cards, who is still depicted in this dress.

Welsh, and by them called "Hell," from the great violence and ferocity of his temper, was then about forty years old. He was clothed in a light suit of armour—the hauberk, with the rings set edgewise, reaching down to the knees. His helmet was cylindrical, the *avantaille*, or face-guard, thrown up. He wore a coloured surcoat; a fashion that seems to have originated with the Crusaders, not only for the purpose of distinguishing the different leaders, but as a veil to protect the armour, so apt to heat excessively when exposed to the direct rays of the sun. It was of a violet colour, without any distinctive mark or badge. His highly-decorated shield was borne behind him, the three garbs and the lions being chiefly conspicuous in the marshalling: the former, the original bearing of Hugh Lupus, was often used by the constables of Chester, in compliment to their chief lord. Its shape was angular, and suspended from the neck by a strap called guige or gige, a Norman custom of great antiquity. A huge broadsword was carried by his armour-bearer, the person of the chief being without any further means of impediment or defence than a French stabbing sword, fastened on one side of his pommel, and a stout battle-axe on the other. The horse was decorated with great and costly profusion. At a short distance rode William de Bellamonte, the baron's inseparable companion. A small train of archers and cross-bowmen brought up the rear of the escort, save the baggage and sumpter-horses, laden not only with provisions but cooking utensils, and even with furniture for the household. In those days it was a matter both of economy and necessity for the occupants or lords of several castles to travel with accompaniments of this sort; though possessing many residences, most of them had the means and even conveniences only for the furnishing of one.

The seneschal and his train alighted, doing homage to their lord, who was conducted with great pomp

and ceremony into the fortress, now lapsed for ever from the blood and succession of the Lacies; yet Roger de Fitz-Eustace and his descendants, probably in commemoration of the source whence originated their great honours and endowments, were ever afterwards styled by the surname of De Lacy; and, strange as it may appear, his father, John, constable of Chester, who died fifteen years previously to this event, and who founded the Cistercian abbey of Stanlaw, the parent establishment of Whalley, though he had not the slightest pretensions to the name of Lacy, was popularly invested with the name. It is still more singular that the mistake should have been committed by Henry de Lacy, the last of the line of the Fitz-Eustace, third in descent from Roger, in the foundation-charter of Whalley Abbey, where he expressly styles his ancestor "Joh. de Lacy, Const. Cest."

Accompanied by her father and her female attendants, the "gentle" maiden entered the hall. She was stately and beautifully formed, with little show of her lineage except the high forehead and well-formed nose of the Fitz-Eustace. She was enveloped from head to foot in a long gown or habit; over this was cast a richly-embroidered purple silk surcoat or cloak, embellished with those ephemeral absurdities called pocketing-sleeves. These hung from the wrists almost to the ground, showing an opening or pocket which might have supplied the place of a lady's arm-bag in our own era. A wimple or peplus was thrown over the head; a sort of hood, which, instead of covering the shoulders, was brought round the neck beneath the chin like a warrior's gorget, giving an exceedingly stiff and muffled appearance to the upper part of the figure.

Geoffery was unremitting in his attentions, and his father seemed as assiduous in his court to the fierce Crusader, who listened intently to some private intelligence which the dean was evidently much interested in communicating. The following were the only words

that could be distinguished at the dismissal of the courteous De Whalley, as he retired a few paces ere he departed:

"To-morrow be it," said Fitz-Eustace, "after matins, and we will hear thee further in this matter: let him then be conveyed to our presence."

The dean retired, but at dawn he was again present in the chantry of St. Michael, within the castle.

Fierce came the beams of the morning sun through the eastern oriel of the hall, and the guards and retainers of this feudal fortress were waiting the appearance of their lord. Lounging idly at the great entrance were those more immediately in attendance on their chief, some playing at *merelles*, or nine-men's morris; others tilting with mimic arms, and twanging the bowstring. The pikemen were drawn up in the courtyard, awaiting orders from their superior. Their glittering weapons flung back the morning light in sharp flashes to the sky; while on the tower the dark pennon hung motionless and drooping in the sultry air.

The news of his arrival had drawn hither not a few of the surrounding peasantry to gaze upon the pomp and to pay homage at the court of their feudal lord; and a crowd of idlers was accumulating beneath the walls of the fortress.

The breakfast meal being over, the baron entered through a side door behind a rude bench, overhung with faded drapery, which formed an elevation for the chief. His cheek was scorched and darkened with the burning suns of Palestine, while his beard seemed to have been whitened in that fiery clime. He was now habited in a rich purple cope or gown, fitting close, without sleeves or armholes, and embellished with a deep gold-coloured border, the Anglo-Saxon mantle being now discarded by persons of distinction. The tunic underneath was of scarlet, bordered with real ermine, which, together with the low square cap or coronet that he wore, gave him something of a regal

appearance. A leash of hounds crouched at his feet. Before and below him the heralds and officers of the household arranged themselves, amongst whom Adam de Dutton was conspicuous by his ludicrously-solemn attitude and appearance. The whole scene had the aspect of a military tribunal, especially when Roger de Lacy (by which name we shall now distinguish him) ordered that silence should be proclaimed, and that the Dean of Whalley should be summoned to his presence.

Robert de Whalley immediately presented himself, with arms folded, and an air of great ceremony in his behaviour.

"Thou hast been prompt to our bidding; the lark, I trow, had but newly risen from her bed ere thou wast away from thine," said the baron.

"Three weary miles through this grim forest is good speed ere matins; but I knew the occasion was urgent, and my lord's commands admit not of delay. The palfrey which you so pleasantly noted yestreen is the sole companion of my pilgrimages to and fro for the good of this noble house. I did offer prayers for the soul of the deceased ere matins this morning, in the chapel."

"Hast heard aught of, or communicated with, the traitor thou didst denounce to me privily yesterday?"

"Being holden as one of great sanctity, by common report, peradventure it were dangerous to lay hands on him without an express warranty from our chief."

"He shall be summoned to our court. Adam de Dutton——"

"Stay, my lord," said the wily dean. "I would, with all due submission, urge that caution were best in this matter."

"Caution, De Whalley! and to what end? Are not the Lacies able to execute as well as to command? Or is the lax ministration of justice now complained of throughout the realm prevailing here also? By the

beard of Hugh Lupus, I will be heard, and obeyed, too ! "

" In good sooth, my lord, I see nor let nor hindrance in this matter, provided that he whom we seek were of such ordinary capacities that be common to flesh and blood, and subject to the same laws ; but when we have to cope with the devil, we must use his subtilty. Pardon me, my lord," continued the accuser, seeing symptoms of impatience gathering on the brow of the haughty chieftain, " though I am plain of speech, yet is it the more easily understood. This delinquent of whom we speak hath not, as the general report testifieth, the same nature and existence as our own. He useth magic—I have credible testimony thereto, my lord ; and anointeth his body so that it shall be invisible. The free unconfined air is not more accessible to the scared bird than rocks and walls are to this impalpable mockery of our form ; and yet he may be dealt with."

" Troth, a man of many faculties. How came he thus ? "

" The vulgar do imagine that by dint of great maceration and humility, by prayer and fasting, he hath attained communion with angels ; but I suspect they be those of the bottomless pit ! "

" And why should he withhold the deed ? "

" I know not, save that he purposeth by fraud and subtilty to cast these fair possessions into the treasury of the holy church, and build an abbey hereabout, the like whereof hath not been seen for glory and magnificence."

" Doth he then deny our right to the inheritance ? The Lady Fitz-Eustace had a fair copy of the deed, purporting to be sent by the holy confessor who shrived the testator in his extremity. But how hath this canting hermit gotten the writing into his possession ? "

" I know not, my lord, unless it be that the like arts have enabled him to appropriate it by other means than those of honesty and good faith. But give me a band

of men, together with leave so to deal with him as I shall see fit, and I trust ere long to render a good account of the matter. I will come upon him unawares, ere he can render his body inaccessible, and lay hold of the traitor."

"Traitor!" echoed a voice from behind a screen at the lower extremity of the hall. Every eye was turned in that direction; when lo! the hermit himself, the end and object of their deliberations, stalked forth, unquestioned and unobstructed.

The baron rose, and his grim eyebrows were fiercely knit and contracted. He looked inquiringly towards the dean, who, for a moment, was confounded by this unexpected event. Yet his presence of mind and fertility of expedient did not forsake him.

"Let him be instantly bound, my lord," whispered De Whalley, "and holden by main force, or he will escape like a limed bird from the twigs. Let him be led forthwith to the dungeon, where I myself will question him. It is not fitting that this plotter should practise devilish devices upon our assembly."

At a signal from their chief the soldiers surrounded him; but the hermit, whose features were still hidden by the cowl, took hold of the foremost, and with an incredible strength dashed him to the ground. The others drew back intimidated.

"Treason, my lord, treason!" cried the dean; "you behold him even in your presence exercising forbidden arts. Away with him to the dungeon! Guards, do your office."

"Miscreant, beware!" said the hermit. De Whalley, though bold and generally undaunted, started back at the sound.

"What! this lawless intromission to our face, and in our council, too?" cried the baron. "Seize that hooded kite, knaves, or I will hang everyone o' ye on the Furca ere the sun be two hours older!"

Roger de Lacy, in a threatening attitude, approached

the guards, who now environed the hermit, using more caution than before. Suddenly they rushed upon him, and he was pinioned ere he could make the least resistance.

At this moment, so anxiously hoped for and expected by the dean, the latter pushed towards him. Thrusting his hand into the hermit's bosom, the long-coveted parchment was in his grasp, and in a twinkling it was conveyed to his own.

"How now!" cried the baron, "wherefore in such haste? I trow the deed is ours!"

With a great show of obedience and respect he drew the parchment again from beneath his robe, and holding it cautiously beside him, exclaimed:

"My lord, ere this be read is it not prudent that we convey the traitor to the dungeon, lest by his subtilty the writing be wrested from our grasp?"

The hermit, yet held in close custody of the guards, cried with a loud voice:

"Who is the traitor let the walls of my cell bear witness, when they heard him offer a heavy bribe that this, the only evidence to the right of the Fitz-Eustace, might be destroyed!"

"Fatherest thou the accursed progeny of thine avarice upon me?" cried the dean, apparently indignant at so unjust an accusation.

"Give me the roll," said the constable, "and we will confront him by what he would have withheld. After we have made our own right secure, we adjudge him to his deserts."

The dean was obliged, however unwillingly, to obey; handing forward the parchment, which Roger de Lacy unfolded in the presence of the hermit. But it would be impossible to describe the consternation of the chieftain when he read therein a formal grant, bequeathing the whole of these vast possessions to Robert de Whalley and his heirs for ever.

The dean, apparently with surprise and a well-feigned

indignation at the fraud which the hermit intended to have put upon him, exclaimed:

"I had a grievous suspicion long ago that this hoary hypocrite would play me false; and indeed his great unwillingness to show the deed led me to think that he meditated some deadly wrong."

"But wherefore," inquired the chieftain, "should there be messengers to Halton with news and credentials so explicit that the estate was left without let or encumbrance to the Lady Fitz-Eustace? A web of mystery is here which we will speedily unravel. Who gave thee this deed?? and wherefore shouldest thou conceal it?" said he, addressing the hermit.

"Roger de Fitz-Eustace," replied the prisoner, "thine honour is abused. That lying instrument was never in my charge."

"Why hast thou refused to render up the deed?"

"Lest it should fall into the hands of robbers, and thou shouldest be cheated of thine inheritance. This traitor hath long had an eye to the possession."

"'Tis his," returned the constable, sternly, "by this good title."

"'Tis a fraud—a base attempt put forth by this cutpurse to wrest it from thee. Search him, and if thou findest not another, and of a different tenor, hidden about his goodly person, let me die a traitor's death."

"I see not that our power hath need of such a pleasant exercise. Thou art accused by him of treachery; and verily 'tis a vain attempt to rid thee of the charge to throw back the accusation upon him thou hast wronged."

"My Lord de Fitz-Eustace," said the dean—but Roger looked displeased at this style and address, reminding him so soon of the departure of his lately-assumed title De Lacy—"your ear and mine have been too long abused by this plotting wizard. He is now subject to my authority. Hereby do I assume my rights, and arraign the culprit before my tribunal."

The ambitious churchman approached the judgment-seat, whereon he was just ascending; but the hermit with a desperate effort, burst from his bonds, and ere the guards could arrest him he had grasped his adversary by the throat.

"Traitor, I warned thee beforetime. Now will I unrobe thy villainy to its very nakedness."

The hermit, thrusting one hand beneath the garment of his victim, drew forth the real deed, which had been dexterously exchanged by the wily priest for his own fraudulent imposture. He then loosened his grasp, and placed the real instrument in the hands of the baron.

"'Tis a forgery—a base disposal of my rights," roared out the infuriate and detected hypocrite.

But Roger de Lacy immediately saw that the deed was to a similar purport with the copy which had been sent by some unknown hand, immediately on the death of the testator, to Halton Castle.

With a look of devouring and terrible indignation, he cried out:

"Though thou wert the holy pontiff himself, and all the terrors of the Church were at thy command, thou shouldst not escape my vengeance, thou daring priest! To the Furca!—his offence is repugnant to my nostrils —'tis rank with treason!"

"Hold!" cried the mysterious hermit: "I have promised him protection, nor shall the promise be forgone."

"Thou!" cried the warrior, with unfeigned astonishment; "and who art thou that seemst here the arbiter of destiny, whether good or evil?"

"A sinful but heaven-destined man," replied the hermit, meekly.

"Our vengeance slumbereth not," said the chief; "the sentence is gone forth, and he dies ere sunset."

"Not so," replied the hermit, again assuming the attitude of command.

"By the beard of Hugh Lupus, he dieth."

"He doth, but not by thy decree."

"How! methinks the fever of disloyalty hath seized you all: the infection hath so tainted your nature that a skilful leech, whom I employ in cases of emergency, will be of service—my headsman, or hangman, as shall seem most fitting. He dies, I tell thee, though the saints themselves were interceding."

"I have promised," said the hermit again, with the confidence of careless superiority.

Adam de Dutton, who had hitherto been waiting anxiously for an opportunity to communicate with his lord, now whispered something in his ear.

"How!" said the bewildered chieftain; "'tis said thou wearest the badge of our house, and art thyself under some surreptitious disguise."

"I wear no disguise," returned the hermit calmly; "what thou seest is my badge, and will be, Heaven permitting, until I die."

"Who art thou!"

"A sinful mortal like thyself, but worn down with long vigils and maceration. Lord of as wide inheritance as thou, and yet a tenant only in a narrow cell!"

"Thou speakest riddles;—thy meaning?"

"I was an outcast, though heir to a vast heritage. I vowed that if He, whose prerogative it is, would cleanse me from my stains, my life should thenceforth be His, and consecrate to Heaven. I was a leper; but my prayer was heard. I washed in yonder holy well which gushes from the rock, whose virtues had been reported to me. Washing daily, with faith and prayer, I was healed. I found close by a convenient hermitage; and many caverns and secret chambers, with hidden passages, and communications, had been dug therefrom, by which I could pass to and fro, and thus visit the castle unseen. I was the confessor and companion of Robert de Lacy. At my desire he left the whole of his domains to the

Fitz-Eustace. But thou art not the eldest-born of thy father."

"My eldest brother has long been dead. He was a leper; his cruel disease drove him from the haunts of men. The last we knew of him, he went forth with cup and clapper as they are wont. Soon after the news arrived of his decease."

"Was he not driven forth by rude and cruel taunts, the rather?" said the hermit, gazing with unaverted eye on the haughty chieftain. "This noble birth and heritage are mine! Behold, 'tis thus I repay your injustice!"

He threw off his cloak; underneath appeared a complete suit of proof armour, and a surcoat, on which was emblazoned the badge of the Fitz-Eustace.

"I am Richard Fitz-Eustace, thine elder brother! Nay, put off that brow of discontent. I claim not my birthright; the vows of Heaven are upon me, and to thee and thine will this good inheritance devolve. One right only do I claim—this prisoner is free. Was he not my stay and sustenance when the fiat of Heaven guided me hither? He sheltered me, and had pity on mine infirmity. Moreover, he had some well-founded expectancy towards these domains, by reason of kindred to the Lacies, had they not been devised by will to the Fitz-Eustace. His blood is noble as our own. He thinks there is injustice in the deed, but not to him shall the atonement come. Thou hast a daughter, and my prescience hath this consequence, that by her this rankling wound shall be healed. If so be that he have found favour in her sight, let her and the son of this ambitious priest be joined together in the bonds of holy wedlock; for my word is gone forth—his blood mingles with ours."

The whole assembly were aghast with this thrilling discovery. The baron would have embraced his brother; but the gloomy ascetic forbade. He left the hall, returned to his cell, and but a short period elapsed

ere the grave he had prepared with his own hands was closed over his corpse—the period of his sojourn having been shortened, no doubt, by the austerities and mortifications he deemed himself called upon to endure.

Maud was shortly afterwards united to Geoffrey de Whalley, unto whom her father granted the Villa de Tunley or Townley, and the manor of Coldcoats, with Snodworth, as a marriage portion. From them was descended the later owner of Townley, nephew to that celebrated scholar and antiquary, Charles Townley, the twenty-ninth in descent from Spartlingus, the first Dean of Whalley upon record. The latter was predecessor to Cutwulph, whose exploits in the days of Canute we have before noticed.

Soon afterwards died Robert de Whalley, his departure hastened, it is said, by grief and chagrin at the loss of these long-coveted possessions.

Roger de Lacy died 1st October, A.D. 1211, after a long and active life, spent between his arduous wars and invasions of the Welsh, and his no less arduous journeyings to and fro between the castles of Clitheroe and Pontefract, where he spent the latter part of his days. He was succeeded by John de Lacy, his eldest son, who, by marriage with Margaret, daughter and co-heiress of Robert, son of De Quincey, Earl of Winchester, became Earl of Lincoln, by patent from Henry III, the monarch having regranted this title to him and his heirs for ever.

THE GREY MAN OF THE WOOD

OR

THE SECRET MINE

" *Humph.* Say, what art thou that talk'st of kings and queens.
K. Hen. More than I seem, and less than I was born to ;
A man at least, for less I should not be ;
And men may talk of kings, and why not I ?
Humph. Ay, but thou talk'st as if thou wert a king.
K. Hen. Why, so I am, in mind, and that's enough.
Humph. But if thou be a king, where is thy crown ? "

King Henry VI.

Waddington Hall, the site of the following legend, says Pennant, " is a stone house, with some small ancient windows, and a narrow winding staircase within, now inhabited by several poor families ; yet it formerly gave shelter to a royal guest. The meek usurper, Henry VI, after the battle of Hexham, in 1463, was conveyed into this county, where he was concealed by his vassals for an entire twelvemonth, notwithstanding the most diligent search was made after him. At length he was surprised at dinner at Waddington Hall, and taken near Bungerley Hippingstones in Clitherwood. The account which Leland gives from an ancient chronicle concurs with the tradition of the country, that he was deceived—i.e., betrayed—by Thomas Talbot, son and heir to Sir Edmund Talbot, of Bashal, and John his cousin, of Colebry. The house was beset ; but the king found means to get out, ran across the fields below Waddow Hall, and passed the Ribble, on the stepping-stones, into a wood on the Lancashire side, called Christian Pightle, but being closely pursued, was there taken. From hence he was carried to London, in the most piteous manner, on horseback, with his legs

tied to the stirrups. Rymer has preserved the grant of a reward for this service, of the estates of Sir Richard Tunstall, a Lancastrian, to Sir James Harrington, by Edward IV, dated from Westminster, July 9th, 1465."

At that time Waddington belonged to the Tempests, who inherited it by virtue of the marriage of their ancestor, Sir Roger, in the reign of Edward I, with Alice, daughter and heiress of Walter de Waddington. An alliance had just been made between the Tempests and the Talbots. It may be presumed that, in order to save their estates (which they afterwards were suffered quietly to possess), they agreed with Sir James to give up the saintly monarch, which was the reason that the latter had the reward for what the grant calls "his great and laborious diligence in taking our great traitor and rebel, Henry, lately called Henry VI."

Far different was the conduct of Sir Ralph Pudsay, of Bolton Hall, where the King was concealed for some months prior to his appearance at Waddington. Quitting Bolton, probably from some apprehension that his retreat was in danger of being discovered, he left behind him certain relics, a pair of boots, a pair of gloves, and a spoon. The boots are of fine brown Spanish leather, lined with deer-skin, tanned with the fur on; about the ankles is a kind of wadding under the lining, to keep out wet. They have been fastened by buttons from the ankle to the knee; the feet are remarkably small (little more than eight inches long); the toes round, and the soles, where they join to the heel, contracted to less than an inch in diameter.

The gloves are of the same material, and have the same lining; they reach up, like women's gloves, to the elbow; but have been occasionally turned down, with deer-skin outward. The hands are exactly proportioned to the feet, and not larger than those of a middle-sized woman. In an age when the habits of the great, in peace as well as war, required perpetual exertions of bodily strength, this unhappy prince must have been equally contemptible from corporeal and from mental imbecility.*

A well adjoined to Bolton Hall still retains his name.

* Whitaker's *Craven*.

He is said to have ordered it to be dug and walled round for a bath, and it is much venerated by the country people to this day, who fancy that many remarkable cures have been wrought there.

It is not generally recorded that the science of alchemy was much encouraged by the royal visionary. Though he had commissioned three adepts to make the precious metals, and had not received any returns, his credulity remained unshaken, and he issued a pompous grant in favour of three other alchemists, who boasted that they could not only transmute metals, but could impart perpetual youth, with unimpaired powers both of mind and body, by means of a specific called the *Mother and Queen of Medicines, the Celestial Glory, the Quintessence or Elixir of Life.* In favour of these " three lovers of the truth, and haters of deception," as they styled themselves, Henry dispensed with the law passed by his grandfather, Henry IV, against the undue multiplication of gold and silver, and empowered them to transmute the precious metals. This extraordinary commission had the sanction of Parliament ; and two out of the three adepts were the heads of Lancashire families—viz., Sir Thomas Ashton of Ashton, and Sir Edmund Trafford of Trafford. These worthy knights obtained a patent for changing metals, 24 Hen. VI. The Philosophers, probably imposing upon themselves as well as others, kept the king's expectation wound up to the highest pitch ; and in the following year he actually informed his people that the happy hour was approaching when, by means of the *stone*, he should *be able to pay off his debts.**

With regard to the prophecy or denunciation made by him against the Talbots, recorded in our legend, Dr. Whitaker observes : " Something like these hereditary alternations of sense and folly might have happened, and have given rise to a prophecy fabricated after the event ; a real prediction to this effect would have negatived the words of Solomon—' Yea, I have hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun, because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me ; and who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool ? '

* Pennant.

" This, however, is not the only instance in which Henry is reported to have displayed that singular faculty, the *Vaticinium Stultorum.*"*

In 798 this place was noted for the defeat of Wada, the Saxon chief, by Aldred, king of Northumberland. He was one of the petty princes who joined the murderers of King Ethelred. After this overthrow he fled to his castle, on a hill near Whitby, and, dying, was interred not far from the place. Two great pillars, about twelve feet asunder, mark the spot, and still bear the name of " Wada's Grave."

It was on a bright and glorious summer evening, in the year 1464, while the red glare of sunset was still in the west, and a wide blush of purple passed rapidly over the distant fell and the blue and heath-clad mountain, that a group of labourers were returning from their daily toil through the forest glades that skirt the broad and beautiful Ribble below Waddow. Some of them were of that class called hinds, paying the rents of their little homesteads by stated periods of service allotted to each ; in this respect differing but little from the serfs and villains of a more remote era, their toil not a whit less irksome, though their liberty, in name at least, was less under the control and caprice of their lord.

Two of the peasants loitered considerably behind the rest, seemingly engrossed by a conversation too interesting or too important for the ears of their companions. The elder of the speakers was clad in a coarse woollen doublet ; a belt of untanned leather girt his form ; and on his head was a cap of grey felt, without either rim or band. His gait was heavy and slouching. Strong, tall and muscular, he stooped considerably ; but less through age and infirmity than from the laborious nature of his occupations. His companion, younger and more vivacious, was distinguished by a goodly and well-thriven hump, and by that fulness and

* *Hist.* Whalley.

projection of the chest which usually characterise this species of deformity. His long arms nearly trailed to the ground as he walked; huge and sprawling, they seemed to have been originally intended as an attachment to a frame of much more gigantic proportions. His face had that peculiar form and expression which always, more or less, accompany this kind of malformation. Wide, large, angular; the chin sharp and projecting, supported on the breast; the whole head scarcely rivalling the shoulders in height and obliquity. His disposition was evidently wayward and irascible, and a keen satirical humour lurked in every line of his pallid visage; generally at war with his species, and ready to act on the defensive; snarling whenever he was approached, and always anticipating gibe and insult from his fellows.

"Weary, weary—aye, as a tom-fool at a holiday feast," said the hunchback to his companion. "Spade and axe have I lifted these twenty years, and what the better am I o' the labour? 'A groat's worth o' wit is worth a pound o' sweat,' as my dame says. I'll turn pedlar some o' these days, and lie, and cheat, and sell."

"Aye, Gregory," interrupted the other, "thee'd sell thy own paws, if so be they'd fetch a groat i' the market; but then, I warrant, the dame at the hall would lack her henchman at the churn."

"Tut! I care for naught living but my worthless carcase," replied the hunchback, surveying his own person. "Why should I? there's naught living that cares for me. Sure as fate, if a' waur dead beside, we'd ha' curran' baws i' the pot every day. What a murrain is it to this hungry maw whether Ned Talbot, or Joe Tempest, or any other knave o' the pack, tumbles into his berth, or is put to bed wi' the shovel, a day sooner or later. He maun budge some time. Faugh! how I hate your whining—your cat-a-whisker'd faces, purring and mewling, while parson Pudsay says grace over the

cold carrion ; he cares not if it were hash'd and stew'd i' purgatory, so that he gets the shrift-money. Out upon't, Ralph, out upon it ! this mattock should delve a' the graves i' the parish, if I could get a tester more i' my fist."

" Thou murdering tyke ! wouldst dig my grave ? "

" Aye," shouted Gregory with a grin, displaying a huge double crescent of white teeth, portals to a gulf, grim, hideous, and insatiable ; " aye, for St. Peter's penny."

" And leave me to knock at the gate, and never a doit to pay the porter ? "

" Thou shouldst cry and howl till doomsday, though my pouch had the keeping of a whole congregation of angels."

" Keep out o' my way, cub—unlicked brute ! " cried the infuriated Ralph ; " keep back, I say, or I may send thee first on thine errand to St. Peter. Take that, knave, and——"

But the malicious hunchback stepped aside, and the blow, aimed with a hearty curse at this provoking lump of deformity, fell with a murderous force upon a writhen stem, which bore witness to the willing disposition with which the stroke was dealt. Gregory was laughing and mocking all the while at the impotent wrath of his companion.

" A groat's worth for a penny, I'm not yet boun' for St. Peter's blessing, though, old crump-face ! " cried the leering impertinent, one thumb between his teeth, and the little finger thrust out in its most expressive form of derision and contempt.

" Hush—softly, prithee," said the offended party, his anger all at once under the influence of a more powerful feeling. He stood still, in the attitude of listening, earnestly bending forward with great solicitude and attention.

He pointed to some object just visible through the arches of the wood, in the dim twilight.

"There is the grey man o' the mine again, as I live, Gregory; we'd best turn back, for our companions are gone out of hearing." The terrified rustic was preparing for immediate flight, but Gregory caught him by the belt.

"How now! stand to thy ground, man," said he; "I've had speech at him not long ago. We came upon one another suddenly, to be sure, and I could not well escape, so I stood still. He did the same, shook his pale and saintly face, and with a wave o' the hand bade me pass on."

"But look thee," replied the other, "I'm bodily certain he walks without a shadow at his tail. See at that big tree there; why, the boughs bend before he touches 'em, like as they were stricken wi' the wind. I declare if the very trees don't step aside as if they're afraid of him. I'll not tarry here, good man."

Disengaging himself from the other's grip, Ralph ran through the wood in an opposite direction, and was soon out of sight. A loud shout from Gregory followed him as he fled, which only served to quicken his speed; and the hunchback was left alone. The figure which was the moving cause of this cowardly apprehension almost immediately disappeared behind a projecting crag, at the base of which grew a thick skirting of underwood; but Gregory pursued cautiously in the same direction. He had heard strange stories of demons guarding heaps of treasure; and it was currently reported that in former times a mine had been secretly worked in these parts for fear of discovery; all mines yielding gold and silver, so as to leave a profit from the working, being considered as "mines royal," and regarded as the property of the king.* Gregory's

* Webster, in his *Metallographia*, mentions a field called Skilhorn, in the township of Rivington-within-Craven, "belonging to one Mr. Pudsay, an ancient esquire, and owner of Bolton Hall, juxta Bolland; who, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, did get good store of silver-ore, and convert it to his own use, or rather coined it, as many do believe, there being many

prevailing sin was avarice ; and oftentimes this vice put on the appearance of courage, by rendering him daring for its gratification, though at heart a coward. He thought that if the treasure were once within his grasp, neither man nor demon should regain it.

For a short time past this part of the forest had been commonly reported as the haunt of a spectre in the likeness of a man clad in grey apparel, who by some was supposed to be an impalpable exhalation from a concealed mine existing in the neighbourhood. It is well known

shillings marked with an escallop, which the people of that country call Pudsay shilling to this day. But whether way soever it was, he procured his pardon for it, and had it, as I am certified from the mouths of those who had seen it." Webster further adds : " While old Basby (a chemist) was with me, I procured some of the ore, which yielded after the rate of twenty-six pounds of silver per ton. Since then, good store of lead has been gotten ; but I never could procure any more of the sort formerly gotten ; the miners being so cunning, that if they meet with any vein that contains so much ore as will make it a myne royale, they will not discover it."

Dr. Whitaker, in his *History of Craven*, says : " The following papers, lately communicated to me from the evidences of the Pudsays, put the matter out of doubt :—' Case of a myne royall. Although the gold or silver contained in the base metals of a mine in the land of a subject be of less value than the baser metal, yet if gold and silver doe countervaile the charge of refining, or bee of more value than the baser metal spent in refining itt, this is a myne royall, and *as wel the base metall* as the gold and silver in it, belongs to the crown.

' Edw. Herbert, Attorney-General. Tho. Lane
Oliver St. John, Solicitor-General. Jo. Maynard.
Orl. Bridgman. Hdw. Hyde.
Joh. Glanvill. J. Glynn.
Jeoffry Palmer. Harbottle Grimstone,' &c.

" So favourable at that time were the opinions of the most constitutional lawyers (for such were the greater part of these illustrious names) to the prerogative. But the law on this head has been very wisely altered by two statutes of William and Mary.—Blackstone, iv. 295.

" The other paper is of later date :—' To the King's most excellent Majestie. The humble petition of Ambrose Pudsay, Esq., sheweth, that your petitioner having suffered much by imprisonment, plunder, &c., for his bounden loyalty, and having many years concealed a myne royall, in Craven, in Yorkshire, prayeth a patent for digging and refining the same.' "

that these places are generally guarded by some covetous demon, who, though unable to apply the treasures to their proper use, yet strives to hinder anyone else from gaining possession.

Gregory had once encountered it unexpectedly, face to face, but he did not then follow—surprise and timidity preventing him. He, however, resolved that, should another opportunity occur, he would track the spectre to its haunt, and by that means find out the opening and situation of the mine.

He now crept slowly towards the crag, behind which the figure had retired. Looking cautiously round the point, he again saw the dim spectral form only a few yards distant. Suddenly he heard a low whistle, and the next moment the mysterious figure had disappeared—not a vestige could be traced. He thrust his huge head between the boughs for a more uninterrupted survey, but nothing was seen, save the bare escarpment of the rock, and the low bushes, behind which the phantom had, a moment before, been visible. Though somewhat daunted, he crept closer to the spot, but darkness was fast closing around him, and the search was fruitless.

"Humph!" said the disappointed treasure-hunter audibly; "daylight and a stout pole may probe the mystery to the bottom. I'll mark this spot."

"Mark this spot," said another voice at some distance, repeating his words like an echo. The rock was certainly within "striking distance," and it might have been this accident which lent its aid to the delusion.

Gregory could not withstand so apparently supernatural an occurrence. He took to his heels, driven fairly off the field; nor did he look behind him until safely entrenched before a blazing fire in the kitchen at Waddington Hall.

"Out, ill-favoured hound!" said a serving wench, who was stirring a blubbering mess of porridge for

supper. But Gregory was not in the humour to reply: he sat with one long lean hand under his chin, the other hung down listlessly to his heels, which were drawn securely under the stool on which he sat. His thoughts were not on the victuals, though by long use and instinct his eyes were turned in that direction.

"Thee art ever hankering after the brose, thou greedy churl!" continued the wench, wishful to goad him on to some intemperate reply.

But Gregory was still silent. At this unwonted lack of discourse, Janet, who generally contrived to bring his long tongue into exercise, was not a little astonished. It needed no great wit, any time, to set him a-grumbling; for neither kind word nor civil speech had he for kith or kin, for man or maid.

Looking steadfastly towards him, she struck her dark broad fists upon her hips, and, in a loud and contemptuous laugh, abruptly startled the cynic from his studies. He eyed her with a grin of malice and vexation.

"Thou she-ape, I wonder what first ye'arn made for; the plague o' both man and beast—the worst plague that e'er Pharaoh waur punished wi'. Screech on; I'll ha' my think out, spite o' thy caterwauling."

"Thou art a precious wonder, Master Crab. Squirt thy verjuice, when thou art roasting, some other way. I wonder what man-ape thy mother watch'd i' the breeding. She had been special fond o' children, I bethink me."

"And what knowest thou o' my dame's humours, thou curl-crop vixen?" said Gregory, unwarily drawn forth again from his taciturnity. "How should her inclinations be subject to thy knowledge?"

"She rear'd thee!" was the reply.

Two other hinds belonging to the household, who were watching the issue of the contest, here joined in a loud clamour at the victory; and Gregory, dogged with baiting, became silent, scowling defiance at his foe.

Waddington Hall was at that period a building of great antiquity. Crooks, or great heavy-arched timbers, ascending from the ground to the roof, formed the principal framework of the edifice, not unlike the inverted hull of some stately ship. The whole dwelling consisted of a thorough lobby and a hall, with a parlour beyond it, on one side, and the kitchens and offices on the other. The windows were narrow, scarcely more than a few inches wide, and, in all probability, not originally intended to contain glass.

The chimneys and fireplaces were wide and open; the apartments, except the hall, low, narrow, and inconvenient, divided by partitions of oak, clumsy, and ill-carved with many strange and uncouth devices. The hall was, on the right of the entrance, lighted by one long low window; a massy table stood beneath. The fireplace was on the opposite side, ocupying nearly the whole breadth of the chamber. A screen of wainscot partitioned off the lobby, carved in panels of grotesque workmanship. Beyond the hall was the parlour, furnished as usual with an oaken bedstead, standing upon a ground-floor paved with stone. In this dormitory, the timbers of which were of gigantic proportions, slept Master Oliver and Mistress Joan Tempest—the latter not a little given to that species of uxorious domination which most wives, when they apply themselves heartily to its acquisition, rarely fail to usurp.

"Here," says Dr. Whitaker (this being the general style of building for centuries, and scarcely, if at all, deviated from)—"here the first offspring of our forefathers saw the light; and here, too, without a wish to change their habits, fathers and sons in succession resigned their breath. It is not unusual to see one of these apartments now transformed into a modern drawing-room, where a thoughtful mind can scarcely forbear comparing the past and present—the spindled frippery of modern furniture, the frail but elegant apparatus of a tea-table, the general decorum, the

equal absence of everything to afflict or to transport, with what has been heard, or seen, or felt, within the same walls—the logs of oak, the clumsy utensils, and, above all, the tumultuous scenes of joy or sorrow, called forth, perhaps, by the birth of an heir, or the death of an husband, in minds little accustomed to restrain the ebullitions of passion.

"Their system of life was that of domestic economy in perfection. Occupying large portions of his own domains; working his land by oxen; fattening the aged, and rearing a constant supply of young ones; growing his own oats, barley and sometimes wheat; making his own malt, and furnished often with kilns for the drying of corn at home, the master had pleasing occupation in his farm, and his cottagers regular employment under him. To these operations the high troughs, great garners and chests, yet remaining, bear faithful witness. Within, the mistress, her maid-servants, and daughter, were occupied in spinning flax for the linen of the family, which was woven at home. Cloth, if not always manufactured out of their own wool, was purchased by wholesale, and made up into clothes at home also."*

This is a true picture of the simple habits of our ancestors, and will apply, with little variation, to the scene before us.

Here might be seen the carved "armoury"—the wardrobe, bright, clean, and even magnificent. On the huge rafters hung their usual store of dried hams, beef, mutton, and flitches of bacon. In the store-room, great chests were filled to the brim with oatmeal and flour. All wore the aspect of plenty, and an hospitality that feared neither want nor diminution.

In one corner of the hall at Waddington sat Mistress Joan, her only daughter Elizabeth, and two or three female domestics.

* *Hist. of Whalley*, p. 504.

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They had been spinning, trolling out the while their country ditties with great pathos and simplicity.

Being nigh supper-time, the group were just loitering in the twilight ere they separated for the meal.

"Come, Elizabeth," said her mother, "lay thy gear aside; the strawberries are in the bowl, and the milk is served. Supper and to bed, and a brisk nap while morning."

The dame who addressed her was a perfect specimen of the good housewife in the fifteenth century. She wore a quilted woollen gown, open before, with pendent sleeves, and a long narrow train; a corset, fitted close to the body, unto which the petticoats were attached, and a bodice laced outside. She wore the horned head-dress, so fashionable towards the close of the fourteenth century, and at that time still in use, giving the head and face no slight resemblance to the ace of hearts. An apron was tied on with great care, ornamented with embroidery of the preceding century. Her complexion was dark but clear, and her eyebrows high and well arched. Her mouth was drawn in, aised slightly on one side—a conformation more particularly apparent when engaged in scolding the maids, or in other similar but indispensable occupations.

Her gait was firm, and her person upright. Her age—ungallant historians we must be—was verging closely upon sixty; yet her hair, turned crisp and full behind her head-dress, showed slight symptoms of the chill which hoar and frosty age, sooner or later, never fails to impart.

Elizabeth Tempest was young, but of a staid and temperate aspect, almost approaching to that of melancholic. Her complexion, pale and sallow; her eye full, dark, and commanding, though occasionally more languor was on it than eyes of that colour are wont to express. She wore a long jacket of russet colour, and a crimson bodice. Her hair, turned back from her brow, hung in dark heavy ringlets below the neck, which,

though not of alabaster, was exquisitely modelled. In person she was tall and well shapen, and her whole manner displayed a mind of no ordinary proportions. She was well skilled in household duties, her mother having an especial desire that her daughter should be as notable and thrifty as herself in domestic arrangements.

" Elizabeth" or " Elspet," as she was indiscriminately called, cared little about her reputation touching these important functions. She could sing most of the wild legendary ballads of the time ; her rich, full voice had in it a sadness ravishingly tender and expressive, more akin to woe and the deep untold agony of the spirit, than to lightness and mirth, in which she rarely indulged.

" Give us one of thy ditties ere supper," said the dame, who was just then laying aside her implements in the work-press. " I wonder thy father does not return. The roofs of Bashall ring with louder cheer than our own, I trow. He is playing truant for the nonce, which is dangerous play at best."

" Is he now at our cousin Talbot's ? " inquired the maiden, with a look of more than ordinary interest.

" If he be not on the way back again," returned the dame, as though wishful to repress inquiry.

" The woods are not safe so late and alone. Comes he alone, mother ? "

" Alone ! Aye—and why spierest thou? " The dame looked wistfully, though but for a moment, on her daughter ; then changing her tone, as if to recommend a change of subject, she cried :

" Come, ha' done, Elspet ; we will wait no longer than grace be said. Now to thy song."

The maiden began as follows :

I.

" There sits three ravens on yon tree,
Heigho !

There sits three ravens on yon tree,
As black, as black, as they can be.
Heigho, the derry, derry, down, heigho.

2.

" Says the first raven to the other,
Heigho !
Says the first raven to the other,
' We'll go and eat our feast together.'
Heigho, &c.

3.

" ' It's down in yonder grass-grown field,
Heigho !
It's down in yonder grass-grown field,
There lies a dead knight just new killed.'
Heigho, &c.

4.

" There came a lady full of woe,
Heigho !
There came a lady full of woe,
And her hands she wrung, and her tears did flow.
Heigho, &c.

5.

" She saw the red blood from his side,
Heigho !
She saw the red blood from his side—
' And it was for me my true love died ! '
Heigho, &c.

6.

" ' Oh, cruel was my brother's sword,
Heigho !
Oh, cruel, cruel, was his sword,
But sharper the edge of one scornful word.'
Heigho, &c.

7.

" She laid her on his bosom cold,
Heigho !
She laid her on his bosom cold,
While adown his cheek her tears they rolled.
Heigho, &c.

8.

" No word she spake, but one sob gave she,
Heigho !
No word she spake, but one sob gave she :
Said the ravens, ' Another feast have we,
And long shall thy rest and thy slumbers be.'
Heigho, the derry, derry, down, heigho ! "

At the concluding stanza in walked Oliver Tempest, who, as if to avoid notice, sat down, without uttering a word, in a dark corner at the opposite side of the hall. He looked moody, and wishful to be alone. Joan, for a while, forbore to interrupt his reverie, and the females finished their evening repast in silence.

" Is Sir Thomas Talbot yet returned from the Harringtons ? " inquired the dame soon after, with an air of assumed carelessness.

" He returned an hour only ere I departed."

Another pause ensued.

" And his son Thomas, comes he back from the Pudsays of Bolton ? Does the gentle Florence* look on him kindly, or is the wedding yet delayed ? "

" I know not," was the brief reply. After a short pause he continued—" The wanderer has left Bolton, I learn, and, 'tis said, he bides at Whalley."

* This lady, whose attractions or good fortune must have been uncommon, says the historian of Craven, was daughter to Henry Pudsay of Bolton. She married, first, Sir Thomas Talbot of Bashall, who died 13 Henry VII. ; after which she became the second wife of Henry, Lord Clifford, the shepherd ; and, after his decease, by the procurement of Henry VIII., gave her hand to Richard Grey, youngest son of Thomas, Marquis of Dorset.

Here he cast a furtive look at the domestics, and then at his wife, as though wishful to ascertain if others had understood this intimation.

"Nay, some do boldly affirm that he has been seen i' these very woods," continued he, lowering his voice to a whisper.

"Which heaven forefend!" said the wary dame. "I would not that he should draw us down with him to the same gulf wherein his fortune is o'erwhelmed. No luck that woman ever brought him from o'er sea, and now she's gone——"

"They say that she hath escaped to Flanders," said Oliver, hastily interrupting her.

"I wish he had been so fortunate," said the dame; "what says our cousin Talbot?"

"Hush, dame; our plans are not yet ripe. But more of this anon."

Elizabeth listened with more interest than usual. Every word was eagerly devoured, and with the last sentence she could not forbear inquiring:

"And Edmund?—surely Edmund Talbot is not——"

"What?" sternly inquired her father; "what knowest thou of——? Said I aught whereby thou shouldst suspect us?"

"Hush, thou foolish one," said the more cautious dame; "thy thought alone was privy to it, and so no more. There be others listening."

The moonbeams now crept softly into the chambers, whither, too, crept the weary household; the master and his wife remaining for a short time together in the hall, apparently in earnest discussion. But Elizabeth retired not to her couch. She passed softly through the courtyard, looking round as though in search of some individual. This proved to be the hunchback, Gregory, whom she found ensconced behind a peat-stack in marvellous profundity of thought. With a soft step, and one finger raised to her lips, she gently tapped him upon the shoulder.

Looking round, he saw her gesture and was silent.

"Gregory, art thou honest?" she inquired, in a whisper.

"Why, an' it be, Mistress Elspeth, when it suits with my discretion; that is, if discretion be none the worse for it, eh?"

"Thou art ever so, Gregory; and yet——"

"If ye want honesty, eschew a knave, and catch a fool by the cap. None but fools worry and distemper themselves with this same pale-faced whining jade, that will leave 'em i' the lurch at a pinch; Dame Honesty forsooth. More wit, more wisdom; and there is a plentiful lack of wit in your honest folk," continued the cynic, as though pursuing a train of thought to its ultimate development.

"Gregory, thou art not the rogue thee seems. I think beneath that rough and captious speech there lurks more honesty than thou art willing to acknowledge. Thou hast been angered with baiting until thou wouldst run at every dog that comes into the paddock, though he fawned on thee, and were never so trusty and well behaved."

Gregory was silent. He looked upwards to the bright moon and the quenched orbs that lay about her path. Again Elizabeth whispered, looking cautiously around:

"Wilt do me a service?"

"Aye, for hire," he quickly answered.

"If thine errand is done faithfully, thou mayest get more largess than thou dream'st of."

"Ye want a spoon belike, that ye soil not your delicate fingers?"

"Aye, Gregory, an' thou wilt, we'll first use thee."

"And then the spoon shall be broken, I trow. Well, if I am a spoon, I'll be a golden one, and I shall be worth something when I'm done with. Understand ye this, fair mistress?"

"Yes, knave; and thou shalt have thy reward."

"What! I shall swing the highest, eh?"

"Peace; I want a messenger. Take this."

"Not treason, I trow," said Gregory, as he eyed the billet with a curious but hesitating glance.

"Go by the nearer path to the wood. Where the road divides to the ford and the farther pastures; take the latter, then turn to the right, where the old fir-tree rises above the rock. Walk carefully through the bushes at the base of the crag. Near unto a sharp angle of the rock thy path will be stayed by a fallen tree. Grasp this with both hands, and whistle thrice. I know thou canst be trusty and discreet. Yet remember thy life is in my power shouldst thou fail." She paused, pointing significantly at the billet. "Now hasten. Bring back, and to me only, what shall be committed to thy care. I will expect thee at my window by midnight."

Now it so happened that this precise spot was identified to Gregory's apprehensions with the very place where his attention had that night been directed by the mysterious disappearance of the grey man of the mine. He would certainly have preferred making his second visit by daylight; but needs must when a woman drives, especially when that woman is a mistress, and gold is the goad. Besides, he might perchance get a glimpse of the treasure; and his pockets were wide and his grip close. Thus stimulated to the adventure, he addressed himself to perform her behest.

The night was singularly clear, and the shadows lay on his path, still and beautifully distinct. As he hastened onwards the wood grew darker and more impervious. Here and there the moonbeams crept fantastically through the boughs, like fairy lamps glimmering on his path. Sometimes, preternaturally bright, the wood seemed lit up as though for some magic festival. He followed the directions he had received, pausing not until he saw the dark fir-tree rearing its broad crest and gigantic arms into the clear and twinkling heaven. It looked like the guardian genius of the place—a huge

monster lifting its terrific head, as though to watch and warn away intruders. Beside this was the rock where his adventure must terminate.

With more of desperation than courage he scrambled through the bushes. Not daring to look behind him—for he felt as though his steps were dogged, an idea for which he could not account—he made his way with difficulty by the crag until he came to a fallen tree that had apparently tumbled from the rock. Laying hold of the trunk, he whistled faintly. It was answered; an echo, or something even more indistinct, gave back the sound. His heart misgave him; but he stood committed to the task, and durst not withdraw. Again he whistled, but louder than before, and again it was repeated. With feelings akin to those of the condemned wretch when he drops the fatal handkerchief, he sounded the last note of the signal. His breath was suspended. Suddenly he felt the ground give way beneath his feet, and he was precipitated into a chasm, dark, and by no means soft at the nether extremity.

This was a reception for which he was not prepared. He had sustained a severe shock; but luckily his bones were whole. Recovering from his alarm, he heard a low jabbering noise, and presently a light, which, it seems, had been extinguished by his clumsiness, was again approaching.

The intruder saw, with indescribable horror, a hideous black dwarf bearing a torch. He was dressed in the Eastern fashion. A soiled turban, torn and dilapidated, and a vest of crimson, showed symptoms of former splendour that no art could restore. This mysterious being came near, muttering some uncouth and unintelligible jargon; while the unfortunate captive, caught like a wolf in a trap, looked round in vain for some outlet whereby to escape. The only passage, except the hole through which he had tumbled, was completely filled by the broad unwieldy lump of deformity that was coming towards him. The latter now surveyed him cautious-

ly, and at a convenient distance, croaking in a broken and foreign accent :

" What ho ! Prisoner, by queen's grace. Better stop when little door shall open. Steps, look thee, for climb ; hands and toes ; go to."

Gregory now saw that steps, or rather holes, were cut in the sides of the pit wherein he had fallen, or rather, been entrapped. These he ought to have used when the trap-door was let down ; and he remembered his mistress's caution, to hold fast by the tree. There were, however, no means of escape that way, as the door had closed with his descent.

The ugly thing before him was ten times more misshapen than himself ; and at any other time this flattering consideration would have restored him to comparative good-humour. He was not in the mood now to receive comfort from any source. He felt sore and mightily disquieted. Limping aside, he angrily exclaimed :

" Be'st thou the de'il, or the de'il's footman, sir blackamoor ? I'd have thee tell thy master to admit his guests in a more convenient fashion. Hang me, if my bones will not ache for a twelvemonth. My back is almost broke, for certain."

Here the other bellowed out into a loud laugh, pointing to Gregory's back, then surveying himself, and evidently with congratulation at his own more imaginary prepossessing appearance.

" Sir knight," said the black dwarf, " what errand comes to our mighty prince ? "

" Tut ! if it be his infernal kingship ye mean, I bear not messages to one of his quality."

" Thee brings writing in thy fist. Go to ! "

" From a woman, fallen in love wi' thee, belike. Well, quit me o' woman's favours, say I, if this be of 'em."

" Well-a-day, sir page," cried the grinning Ethiop, whose teeth looked like a double row of pearls set in

a border of carnelian, " my mistress be a queen : I do rub the dust on thy ugly nose if that red tongue wag more, for make bad speech of her. Go to, clown ! "

" Ill betide thee for a blackamoor ape," said Gregory, his courage waxing apace when his fears of the supernatural began to subside ; " and wherefore ? Look thee, Mahound, though my mistress sent me to such a lady-bird as thou art, Master Oliver shall know on't. Thou hast won her with spells and foul necromancie ; but I've commandment from him to catch all that be poaching on his lands. Thou art i' the mine, too, as I do verily guess ; therefore I arrest thee i' the king's name, as a lifter of his treasure, and a spoiler of our good venison."

Gregory, being stout-limbed, and of a more than ordinary strength for his size, proceeded forthwith to execute his threat ; but the dwarf, with a short, shrill scream, gave him a sudden trip, which again laid the officious dispenser of justice prostrate, without either loosing the torch from his hand, or seeming to use more exertion than would have thrown a child.

" Ah, ah, there be quits. Lie still ; go to ; lick thy paws. Know, dog, I'm body to the queen ! "

" Body o' me, I think thee be'st liker fist and crupper. I would I had thee in a cart at holiday-time, and a rope to thy muzzle," said the astonished Gregory. He had dropped his billet in the scuffle, which the dwarf seized, opening it without ceremony.

" A message. Good ; stay here, garbage ; I be back one, two, t'ree," and away straddled the black monster along the passage. Turning suddenly, before he was aware, into another avenue, leading apparently far into the interior, Gregory was left once more in total darkness. He heard the sound of retreating footsteps, but not a glimmer was visible, and he feared to follow lest he might be entangled in some inextricable labyrinth. He recollected to have heard a vague sort of tradition,

that a subterraneous passage once led from the hall to the Ribble bank, whereby the miners had in former days kept their operations secret.

These were the haunts, too, of poachers and deer-stalkers, who made use of such hiding-places to screen their nocturnal depredations. He might be gotten unknowingly into one of their retreats, and he knew the character of such men too well to venture farther into their privy places without leave. But it was strange this ugly and insane thing should be kept here. Its outlandish accent, too, as far as Gregory could distinguish, was still more unaccountable; and that his young mistress should hold any intercourse with such a misshapen mockery of the human form was a mystery only to be resolved by a woman! After all, his first conjecture might be true, and this delicate sprite the ministering demon to some magician who brooded over the treasure.

He grew more timorous in the dark. His own breathing startled him. He revolved a thousand plans of escape; but how was it possible to climb to the pit-mouth without help, and in total darkness? The door, too, would probably defy his attempts to remove it. Suspense was not to be endured. He would have been glad to see the ugly dwarf again, rather than remain in his present evil case.

He now tried to grope out his way, from that sort of undefinable feeling which leads a person to identify change of place with improvement in condition.

Ere he had gone many yards from the spot, however, he saw a light, and presently the flaming torch was visible, with the ugly form he desired.

"Sir messenger, allez. Make scrape and go backward. Bah! What for make lady chuse ugly lout as thee for page?—not know, not inquire. Up, this way; now mind the steps. Bah, not that, fool!"

With some difficulty Gregory was initiated into the mysteries of the ascent. The torch was brandished

high above his head, and with fear and trepidation he prepared to obey.

"But, master sooty-paws, my mistress will be a-wanting of some token; some reply. Hast thou no memory of her sweet favours?"

"Begone, slave-dog, begone! Say we be snug as the fox that will keep in the hole when dogs go hunt. We not go up again till lady sends leave. Go to!"

Gregory mounted with great difficulty. When he approached the mouth, looking upward for some mode of exit, he saw the trap-door slowly open, and he leapt forth into the free air; the cool atmosphere and the quiet moonlight again upon his path. He soon cleared the bushes, and once more was on his way to the house. Elizabeth met him at the gate.

"What ho, sirrah!" said she, "hast thou been loitering with my message? I left my chamber to look out for thee. What answer? Quick."

"Why forsooth, 'tis not easy to say, methinks, for such jabber is hard to interpret. By my lady's leave, I think——"

Here he paused; but Elizabeth was impatient for the expected reply. "Softly, softly, mistress. I but thought your worship were ill bestowed on yonder ugly image."

"Tut, I'm not i' the humour for thine. What message, simpleton?"

"None, good mistress; but that they be snug until urther orders."

"'Tis well; to rest; but hark thee, knave, be honest and discreet; thou shalt win both gold and great honours thereby."

"What! shall I ha' my share o' the treasure?" inquired Gregory, his eyes glistening in the broad moonlight.

"What treasure, thou greedy gled?"

"Why, they say 'tis a mine royal, and——"

"How! knowest thou our secret?"

"Aye, a body may guess. I've not found the road to the silver mine for naught. If I get my grip on't, the king may whistle for his share belike."

"The king! what knowest thou of the king?" said the maiden sharply.

"Eh! lady, I know not on him forsooth. Marry, it would be hard to say who that be now-a-days; for the clerk towed me——"

"Peace! whom sawest thou?"

"Why the ugliest brute, saving your presence, lady, that my two een ever lippened on."

"None else?"

"No, no; I warrant ye, the miners wouldna care to let me get a glint o' the gowd. I only had a look at the hobgoblin, who they have set, I guess, to watch the treasure."

"Oh! I see—aye, truly," said the maiden thoughtfully; "the mine is guarded, therefore be wary, and reveal not the secret, lest he crush thee. Remember," said she at parting, "remember the demon of the cave. One word, and he will grind thy bones to grist."

Gregory did remember the power of this mysterious being, who, he began to fancy, partook more of the supernatural than he had formerly imagined.

Wearied with watching, he slept soundly, but his dreams were of wizards and enchanters; heaps of gold and fairy palaces, wherein he roved through glittering halls of illimitable extent, until morning dissipated the illusion.

Some weeks passed on, during which, at times, Gregory was employed by his mistress, doubtless to propitiate this greedy monster, in conveying food secretly to the mouth of the chasm. He did not usually wait for his appearance, but ran off with all convenient speed when his errand was accomplished. Still his hankering for the treasure seemed to increase with every visit. He oft invented some plan for outwitting the demon, thereby securing to himself the product of the

mine. Some of these devices would doubtless have been accomplished had not fear prevented the attempt. He had no wish to encounter again the hostility of that fearful thing in its unhallowed abode.

His mistress, however, would, at some period or another, no doubt, be in possession of all the wealth in the cave, and he should then expect a handsome share. He had heard, in old legends, marvellous accounts of ladies marrying with these accursed dwarfs for gold; and if he waited patiently, he might perchance have the best of the spoil.

He brooded on this imagination so long that he became fully convinced of its truth; but still the golden egg was long in hatching.

One night he thought he would watch a while. He had just left a large barley-cake and some cheese, a bowl of furmety, and a dish of fruit.

"This monster," thought he, "devours more victuals than the worth of his ugly carcase."

He hid himself behind a tree, when presently he heard a rustling behind him. Ere he could retreat he was seized with a rude grasp, and the gruff accents of his master were heard angrily exclaiming—

"How now, sir knave?—What mischief art thou plotting this blessed night? Answer me. No equivocation. If thou dost serve me with a lie in thy mouth, I'll have thee whipt until thou shalt wish the life were out o' thee."

Gregory fell on his knees and swore roundly that he would tell the truth.

"Quick, hound; I have caught thee lurching here at last. I long thought thou hadst some knavery agoing. What meanest thou?"

Gregory pointed towards the provision which was lying hard by.

"Eh, sirrah! what have we here?" said his master, curiously examining the dainties. "Why, thou cormorant, thou greedy kite, is't not enough to consume

victuals and provender under my own roof, but thou must guttle 'em here, too? I warrant there be other company to the work, other grinders at the mill. Now, horrible villain, thou dost smell fearfully o' the stocks!"

"O master, forgive me!—It was mistress that sent me with the stuff, as I hope the Virgin and St. Gregory may be my intercessors."

"Thy mistress!—and for whom?"

"Why, there's a hole close by, as I've good cause to remember."

"Well, sirrah, and what then?"

"As ugly a devilkin lives there as ever put paw and breech upon hidden treasure. 'Tis the mine, master, that I mean."

"The mine! What knowest thou of the mine?"

"I've been there, and——"

Here he related his former adventure; at the hearing of which Oliver Tempest fell into a marvellous study.

"Hark thee," said he, after a long silence; "I pardon thee on one condition, which is, that thou take another message."

Here the terrified Gregory broke forth into unequivocal exclamations of agony and alarm.

"Peace," said his master, "and listen; thou must carry it as from my daughter. I suspect there's treason lurks i' that hole."

"Aye, doubtless," said Gregory: "for the neibours say 'tis treason to hid a mine royal."

"A mine royal! Aye, knave, I do suspect it to be so. By my troth, I'll ferret out the foulmarts either by force or guile. And yet force would avail little. If they have the clue, we might attempt to follow them in vain through its labyrinths; they would inevitably escape, and I should lose the reward. Hark thee. Stay here and I'll fetch the writing for the message. Stir not for thy life. Shouldst thou betray me, I'll have thy crooked bones ground in a mill to thicken pigs' gruel."

Fearful was the dilemma; but Gregory durst not budge.

The night grew dark and stormy, the wind rose, loud gusts shaking down the dying leaves, and howling through the wide extent of the forest. The moan of the river came on like the agony of some tortured spirit. The sound seemed to creep closer to his ear; and Gregory thought some evil thing was haunting him for intruding into these unhallowed mysteries.

He was horribly alarmed at the idea of another visit to the cave, but he durst not disobey. He now heard a rustling in the bushes by the cavern's mouth. He saw, or fancied he saw, something rise therefrom and suddenly disappear. It was the demon, doubtless, retiring with his prey. He scarcely dared to breathe lest the hobgoblin should observe and seize him likewise. But his presence was unnoticed. He, however, thought that the blast grew louder, and a moan more melancholy and appalling arose from the river. Again Oliver Tempest was at his side.

"Take this, and do thy bidding." He thrust the billet into his hand, which the unfortunate recipient might not refuse.

Trembling in every limb, he approached the place of concealment; but he was too wary now to let go his hold of the fallen trunk.

He whistled thrice, and the ground again seemed to give way. A light glared from beneath, and he cautiously descended the pit.

The grim porter was waiting for him below. He felt as though rushing into the very jaws of the monster, who was but whetting his tusks ere he should devour him.

"Here again!" croaked the ugly dwarf, "what brings thy long legs back Christendom?"

"I know not, master; but if you are i' the humour to read, I've a scrap in my pouch at your high mightiness's service."

Gregory paid more deference to him now than aforetime, having conceived a most profound respect for his attributes, both physical and mental, since his former visit.

"He is himself either some wondrous enchanter," thought he, "or, at any rate, minister or familiar to some mighty wizard, who hath his dwelling-place in this subterraneous abode."

"I have a message here to my lord," said he aloud, handing him the billet at arm's length, with a mighty show of deference and respect. The uncourteous dwarf took the writing, and left Gregory in darkness again to await his return. He shook at every joint, while the minutes seemed an age. Again the light flickered on the damp walls, and the mysterious being approached. He addressed the envoy with his usual grin of contempt.

"Tell the lady, my master be glad. He will leap from his prison by to-morrow, as she say, and appear at dinner."

"The dickons he will," said Gregory, as he clambered up the ascent, not without imminent jeopardy, so anxious was he to escape.

"This is a fearful message to master," thought he, as he leapt out joyfully into the buoyant air: "but at any rate I'll now be quit o' the job." And the messenger gave his report, for Oliver Tempest was impatiently awaiting his return.

"'Tis well," said he; "and now, hark thee, should one syllable of this night's business bubble through thy lips, thou hadst better have stayed in the paws of the hobgoblin. Away!"

Gregory needed no second invitation, but scampered home with great dispatch, leaving his master to grope out the way as he thought proper.

There was more bustle and preparation for dinner than usual on the morrow. Oliver Tempest had sent messengers to Bashall and Waddow; but the guests

had not made their appearance. About noon the hall-table was furnished with a few whittles and well-scoured trenchers. Bright pewter cups and ale-flagons were set in rows on a side-table, and on the kitchen hearth lay a savoury chine of pork and pease-pudding. In the great boiling-pot, hung on a crook over the fire, bubbled a score of hard dumplings, and in the broth reposed a huge piece of beef—these dainties being usually served in the following order—broth, dumpling, beef, according to the old distich :

> " No broth, no ba' ;
> No ba', no meat at a'."

Dame Joan of Waddington was the presiding genius of the feast, the conduit-pipe through which flowed the full stream of daily bounty, dispensing every blessing, even the most minute. In that golden age of domestic discipline it was not beneath the dignity of a careful housewife to attend and take the lead in all culinary arrangements.

The master strode to and fro in the hall, and Elizabeth was humming at her wheel. He looked anxious and ill at ease, often casting a furtive glance towards the entrance, and occasionally a side-look at his daughter. She sometimes watched her father's eye, as though she had caught his restless apprehensions, and would have inquired the cause of his uneasiness. Suddenly a loud bay from a favourite hound that was dozing on the hearth announced the approach of a stranger. Oliver advanced with a quick step into the courtyard, and soon re-entered leading in a middle-sized, middle-aged personage, slightly formed, whose pale and saintly features looked haggard and apprehensive, while his eye wavered to and fro, less perhaps with curiosity than suspicion.

He was wrapped in a grey cloak ; and a leathern jerkin, barely meeting in front, displayed a considerable breadth of under garment in the space between hose and doublet. These were fastened together with tags

or points, superseding the use of wooden skewers, with which latter mode of suspension not a few of our country yeomen were in those days supplied. His legs were protected by boots of fine brown Spanish leather lined with deer-skin, tanned with the fur on, and buttoned from the ankle to the knee. He had gloves of the same material, reaching to the elbow when drawn up, but now turned down with the fur outwards. The hands and feet were remarkably small, but well shapen. A low grey cap of coarse woollen completed the costume of this singular visitor. There was at times, in the expression of his eye, an indescribable mixture of imbecility and enthusiasm, as though the spirit of some Eastern fakir had reanimated a living body. A gleam of almost supernatural intelligence was mingled with an expression of fatuity, that in less enlightened ages would have invested him with the dangerous reputation of priest or prophet in the eyes of the multitude.

Oliver Tempest led the way with great care and formality. To a keen-eyed observer, though, his courtesy would have appeared over-acted and fulsome; but the object of his assiduities seemed to pay him little attention, further than by a vacant smile that struggled around the corners of his melancholy and placid mouth.

Dame Joan Tempest now came forth, bending thrice in a deep and formal acknowledgment. The stranger stayed her speech with a look of great benignity.

"I know thy words are what our kindness would interpret, and I thank thee. Your hospitality shall not lose its savour in my remembrance, when England hath grown weary of her guilt—when the cry of the widow and the fatherless shall have prevailed. I am hunted like a partridge on the mountains; but by the help of my God I shall yet escape from the noisome pit, and from the snares of the fowler."

Yet the look which accompanied this prediction seemed incredulous of its purport. He heaved a deep sigh, and his eyes were suddenly bent on the ground.

Being introduced into the hall, the seat of honour was assigned him at the table.

Elizabeth, when she saw him, uttered an ill-suppressed exclamation of surprise, and her pale countenance grew almost ghastly. Her lips were bloodless, quivering with terror and dismay. Agony was depicted on her brow—that agony which leaves the spirit without support to struggle with unknown, undefined, uncomprehended evil. Not a word escaped her; she hurried out of the hall, as she thought, without observation; but this sudden movement did not escape the eye of her father. Triumph sat on his brow; and his cheek seemed flushed with joy at the result of his stratagem.

The servitors appeared; and the smoking victuals were disposed in their due order. The joints were placed at the upper end of the board, while broth and pottage steamed out their savoury fumes from the lower end of the table. At some distance below the master and his dame sat the male domestics, then the females, who occupied the lower places at the feast, except two, who waited on the rest.

The master blessed the meal, the whole company standing. The broth was served round to the lower forms, and the meat and dainties to the higher; but Elizabeth was still absent.

When she left the hall it was for the purpose of speaking to Gregory, whom she found skulking and peeping about the premises.

"Gregory, why art thou absent from thy nooning?" inquired Elizabeth, with a suspicious and scrutinizing glance.

"I'm not o'er careful to bide i' the house just now. Is there aught come that—that——" Here he stammered and looked round, confirming the suspicions of the inquirer.

"Gregory, thou art a traitor; but thou shalt not escape thy reward. I'll have thee hung—aye, villain, beyond the reach of aught but crows and kites."

"Whoy, mistress, I'd liefer be hung nor stifled to death wi' brimstone and bad humours."

"None o' thy quiddities, thou maker of long lines and quick legs. Confess, or I'll——"

"Whoy, look ye, mistress, you've been kind, and pulled me out of many an ugly ditch."

"Why dost thou hesitate, knave? I'm glad thy memory is not so treacherous as thy tongue."

"Nay, mistress, I've no notion to sup brose wi' t' old one: those that dinner wi' him he may happen ask to supper; and he'd need have a long whittle that cuts crumbs wi' the de'il."

"Art thou at thy riddles again? Speak in sober similitudes, if thou canst, sirrah."

"Your father sent me on a message to the little devilkin last night. I was loth enough to the job; but he catched me as I went wi' the victuals."

"A message!—and to what purport?"

"Nay, that I know not. The invitation was conveyed in a scrap of writing, and I'm not gifted in clerkship an' such like matters."

A ray of intelligence now burst upon her. She saw the imminent danger which threatened the fugitive, who had been hitherto concealed principally by her contrivances. Gregory watched the rapid and changing hues alternating on her cheek. She saw the full extent of the emergency; and though her father was the traitor, she hesitated not in that trying moment.

No time was to be lost, and measures were immediately taken to countervail these designs.

"What answer sent he?" she hastily inquired.

"The de'il's buckie said his master would be at the hall by dinner-time; and I'll not be one o' the guests where Old Clootie has the pick o' the table."

"Thou witless runnion, haste, or we are lost! It is the king! I would I had trusted thee before with the secret. Mayhap thy wit would have been without obscuration. Supernatural terrors have taken thy reason

prisoner. Haste, nor look behind thee until thou art under the eaves of Bashall. This to my cousin, Edmund Talbot ; he is honest, or my wishes themselves are turned traitors," said the maiden wistfully. She scrawled but one line, with which Gregory departed on his errand.

Oliver Tempest grew uneasy at his daughter's absence. He inquired the cause, but all were alike ignorant. The king inquired, too, with some surprise ; and a messenger was dispatched with a close whisper in his ear.

The meal was nigh finished, when all eyes were turned towards the entrance. A little blackamoor page came waddling in. He made no sign nor obeisance, but took his station, without speaking, behind his master's chair.

" Why, how now, my trusty squire ? " said the disguised monarch ; " thou wast not bidden to this feast."

The dwarf cast a scowling glance at the master of the house, and he replied, while a hideous grin dilated his thick stubborn features :

" This be goodly wassail, methinks. I am weary of lurching and torchlight."

" Tempest," said the king, " I would crave grace for this follower of mine. He is somewhat fearsome and forbidding, but of unwearied fidelity."

" Troth," said Tempest, still wishful to maintain the king's incognito, " the Turks having now taken Byzantium, the great bulwark of Christendom, I did fear me that the first of the tribe from that great army of locusts had descended upon us."

" Fear not," said the unfortunate monarch, with a smile ; " this poor innocent will do no ill. His mistress brought him for me a present from her father's court ; and, to say the truth, he has been a great solace in my trouble. He hath not forsaken me when they who fattened on my bounty—who dipped their hands with me in the dish—have been the first to betray me. The

knave is shrewd and playful, but of an incredible strength, being, as ye may observe, double-jointed. Madoc, let them behold some token of thy power."

The cunning rogue obeyed in a twinkling. He seized the host's chair with one hand, lifting its occupant without difficulty from the ground. With the other he laid hold on him by the throat, and would certainly have strangled him but for the king.

The assault was so sudden and unexpected that the domestics stood still a moment, as though rendered powerless by surprise.

The next instant they all fled pell-mell out of the hall, everyone struggling to be foremost, apprehending that the great personification of all evil was there, bodily, behind them, and in the very act of flying off with their master.

In vain Joan shouted after the cowardly villains, her threats but increased their speed.

"Fly, King Henry," cried the dwarf, in a voice that sounded like the roar of some infuriated beast; "the rascal curs are barking; the stag is in the net. This traitor——" Here he became at a loss for words; but his gesticulations were more vehement. "Fly!" at length he shouted, in a louder voice than before; "I've seen sword and armour glittering in the forest."

But the king was irresolute, as much amazed as any of the rest. He saw the imminent danger of his host, whose face was blackening above the grip of this fierce antagonist, and he cried out:

"Leave go, Madoc; let the curs bark, we fear them not in this good house. Let go, I command thee."

With a look of pity and of scorn the savage loosened his hold, saying:

"Thou be'st not king now, but Henry with the beads and breviary; and here come thy tormentors."

A loud whistle rang through the hall, and in burst a band of armed men, led on by Sir Thomas Talbot

of Bashall, and his oldest son of the same name, together with Sir James Harrington.

Tempest, recovered from his grip, made a furious dart at the king ; but ere he had accomplished his purpose, Edmund Talbot rushed between, at the peril of his life, opening a way for the terrified monarch through the band that had nearly surrounded him.

The king fled through the passage made by his deliverer ; and the dwarf, keeping his enemies at bay, heroically and effectually covered his retreat.

" Edmund Talbot, art thou traitor to thy king ? " said Sir Thomas, from the crowd. " Let me pass ; 'tis thy father commands thee. 'Tis not thy king ; he is a coward and usurper."

" I care not," said the retreating and faithful Edmund. " My arm shall not compass with traitors. Cowards attack unarmed men at their meals."

" Then take thy reward." It was the eldest brother of Edmund who said this, whilst he aimed a terrific blow ; but the dwarf caught his arm ere it descended, and a swinging stroke from a missile which he had picked up in the fray would have settled accounts between the heir of Bashall and posterity had he not stepped aside.

This unequal contest, however, could not long continue, though time, the principal object, was gained, and the king was fast hastening again towards the cavern. In the courtyard he met Elizabeth, who implored him to step aside into another place of concealment ; but he was too much terrified to comprehend her meaning. Fear seemed to have bewildered him, and the poor persecuted monarch sped on to his own destruction. In the hurry and uncertainty of his flight, he unfortunately took the wrong path, which led by a circuitous route to the ford ; and, as he stepped out of the wood, two of his enemies, having broken through the gallant defence of his adherents, had already gained, and were guarding, the stepping-stones over the river, called " Brunckerley Hippens." Terrified, he flew back into

the wood, but was immediately followed; and again his evil destiny seemed to prevail. He took another path, which led him back to the ford. Here he crossed, and, whilst leaping with difficulty over the stones, the pursuers came in full view. Having gained the Lancashire side, he fled into the wood, but his enemies were now too close upon him for escape, and the royal captive was taken, bound, and conveyed to Bashall. Many cruel indignities were heaped upon him ; and he was conveyed to London in the most piteous plight, on horseback, with his legs tied to the stirrups. Ere he departed, it is said that he delivered a singular prediction—to wit, that nine generations of the Talbot family, in succession, should consist of a wise and a weak man by turns, after which the name should be lost.

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